

Contact name and details	Mrs E Jill Baker Chair of the Council chaircouncil@methodistchurch.org.uk
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SECTION G GENERAL REPORT (2)

1.1 Governance responsibilities

In accordance with its governance responsibilities, the Council:

- approved a memorandum of understanding with All We Can;
- approved an amendment to the memorandum of agreement with Birmingham International Student Homes;
- received a report concerning Cliff College and delegated authority to the Strategy and Resources Committee to receive specific recommendations concerning the staff structure and connexional support for the College;
- considered as directed the Conference's response to Memorial 31 (2021) in the light of the Law and Polity Committee's advice and determined not to make any change to the existing position;
- made appointments and nominations to various bodies and committees;
- under the terms of SO 320(2A), agreed to co-opt Deacon Myrtle Poxon and Deacon Janet Thomas to the Ministerial Candidates Selection Committee;
- acting on behalf of the Conference under the terms of SO 211(1), appointed Deacon Angela Allport and the Revd Dr Eleanor Jackson to the Faith and Order Committee;
- approved a general delegated authority for particular purposes;
- agreed to the arrangements for the sale of 240 Abbeyfield Road, Sheffield;
- oversaw, on behalf of the Conference, the purchase of a new building for Methodist Church House and the sale of the existing premises.

1.2 Other business

The Council, in the context of Sunday worship, heard reflections from the President and Vice-President on their year of office.

Should members of the Conference wish to view them, Council papers and minutes are available on the website at www.methodist.org.uk/council

17. Methodist Council part 2

*****RESOLUTION**

17/1. The Conference receives the General Report of the Council.

SECTION H

IMPACT [NOTICE OF MOTION 2021/112]

The 2021 Conference adopted resolution 62/2 in the following form:

The Conference commends the report [Looking to the Future] and a record of its conversation about it to the Council for further deliberation and action. The Conference directs the Council to establish a framework to analyse the cumulative impact of all resolutions brought to the Conference with regard to resources, time and potential benefits. The Conference also appeals to the Council to recognise the reduced capacity at every level and therefore to apply the existing mandate the Council has to evaluate the number and cumulative time impact of resolutions presented to all future Conferences.

The Council spent time at each of its three meetings over the last year considering this Notice of Motion. This included a mix of small group work and conferring as well as hearing from the Strategy and Resources Committee on this important matter.

The results of these conversations have produced a range of considerations that the Council wished to share with the Conference.

At the heart of the conversations has been the recognition that the reduced capacity that exists in many places around the Connexion is of critical importance for all. We all note that the effect of the pandemic has stretched many places and people to breaking point and the appetite for 'new' or increased commitment is often non-existent. The energy simply to keep going is enough for most. This is not a new phenomenon in the least but the last two years have moved us forward to a place we might have reached in another few years anyway.

It is also recognised that in many places there is already significant energy being devoted to the various elements of both the God For All and Justice, Dignity and Solidarity strategies. Both of these represent critical areas of development in our lives as Methodists and so many wish there to be no new work added in whilst these areas are given the appropriate space and consideration.

For many years the Council has discussed the dilemma of our tendency easily to agree to new initiatives because we see them as being necessary or 'the right thing' but our inability to lay other things down in order to make space. This dilemma has

not yet been solved in a way that makes for a manageable approach to mission and ministry for most.

The Council therefore welcomed this Notice of Motion but also noted that whilst it could offer a range of responses (which it does below); it also wanted to draw to the attention of the Conference the conundrum in how the work that both the Council does, and indeed what is asked of the whole Connexion, is initiated. For in the majority of cases it is the direction of the Conference that asks the Methodist people to take on work or initiatives which then are felt to be the cause of the overburdening. The Conference is composed of representatives whose very role is to consider the work before them and think of how it will impact in their Local Church, Circuit and District. For the Conference to agree work that then becomes the thing that discourages a focus on mission or ministry is counter to the point of representative decision-making.

The Council therefore noted that the Conference is not necessarily best enabled to view the totality of resourcing issues and it can appear that decisions are being made in isolation of the cumulative impact (cost, people resource etc). It is important that the Conference is encouraged in itself to think of how any piece of business would be resourced in the church, Circuit and District that the representatives come from. Assuming the creation of the new Connexional Council happens then it will be a critical part of its role to start to address some of these issues. It is important to remind the Conference that as representatives vote they need to be thinking 'what will this look like where I am?', 'who will do this?', 'is this critical?', and 'who will pay?'.

It was also felt that the whole Church had to be able to take a more realistic view of what was ours to do and what we could no longer sustain. Making the decision to lay down an area of work is often seen as a decision to say that work no longer matters to us as it once did. However, we need to be more strategic in accepting that we are no longer of a size or resourced in a way that means we can be all the things we once were. These are hard choices but ones we must make if the focus for the future is in the right places.

It was further noted that the demands of living as a Church in the 21st century with the compliance that is required of us, whilst that compliance is not resisted and indeed welcomed in many areas, it nonetheless is an ever growing area of concern. What is asked of individuals in Circuits and Districts has increased exponentially at a time when our membership continues to decline. In many areas it is assumed that the role of the Connexional Team is to pick up on these gaps, but those gaps are appearing at a time when the budget for the Team continues to be reduced.

The Council further engaged in a conversation about the work that is generated from Notices of Motion. This way of addressing concerns to the Conference by its members is understood to be a critical part of our conferring but it is also noted that some of

17. Methodist Council part 2

the matters brought through this process could have been raised as Memorials to the Conference. This would give a longer lead time into reflecting on the impact of a proposed action prior to the Conference which could then be taken into account with other areas of work.

It was noted that at present the scrutiny focus at the Conference on Notices of Motion that are presented is only on the financial aspects of what is proposed. It was thought that a new Scrutiny Sub Committee of the Conference which is able to comment on the impact on the whole Connexion /people resources, finances and the workload of the Connexional Team as well as taking into consideration other work that has been agreed would be a step forward. This would involve some aspects of the current Business Committee and the Conference Financial Committee.

In order for the Sub Committee suggested above to do its work it is suggested that there should be an additional category on Notice of Motion forms which asks those writing to indicate how they have thought about 'resourcing' not just 'finance' which should indicate workload on all parts of the Connexion.

It was noted that there have been various ways of the overall workplan being presented to the Council and that further reflection was needed on this to ensure that the information required is available. The Senior Management Group of the Connexional Team has begun such a reflection. Assuming the Connexional Council and its Committees are established there will need to be a renewed way for these groups to have a detailed measured workplan for their own work as well as that of the Team.

One further area which the Conference is asked to note, is that as well as the Conference being able to decline to take forward a piece of work there also needs to be the space for the Council to stop a piece of work that has been given to it once the resource constraints are better understood. Currently it is the role of the SRC to assess work and make comment. This is always done retrospectively, and therefore the Conference needs to be aware that this assessment will take place following any decision it makes.

The Council did not exclude itself from a renewed focus on the impact of work it agrees to in any year. Time could be allocated at the Council meeting prior to the Conference to taking an overview of all that was being proposed to the Conference to ensure that cumulative impact was not more than was understood to be bearable by the wider Church.

In order to improve the conferring around individual policy or initiative proposals it was agreed there needed to be some indication on any report to any governance body of the potential impact of the resolutions on the wider Connexion. A simple Red Amber Green system could show which resolutions were likely to cause an increase in what

was being asked of the Methodist people in terms of time, finance or responsibilities. The impact on both lay and ordained office holders as well as members should be included here. It might be appropriate for the Conference to consider if majorities of more than 50% are needed for resolutions requiring a significant increase in resourcing.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

- 17/2. The Conference receives the Report.**
- 17/3. The Conference agrees to establish a Scrutiny Subcommittee of the Conference in place of the Financial Committee with the task of evaluating and reporting to the Conference the impact of any resolution before the Conference proposing additional work.**

SECTION I MISSION COMMITTEE

Further to the decision of the 2021 Conference to establish a Mission Committee, the Council now brings the Standing Orders to give effect to this.

1000A0 Mission Committee

- (1) *The Conference shall appoint annually a Mission Committee consisting of no fewer than 12 and no more than 14 persons, including the Secretary of the Conference, who shall act as convener and a chair and a deputy chair of the committee.***
- (2) *In appointing the committee the Conference shall ensure that as far as possible a diversity of persons involved in varied missional activities in differing contexts is included.***
- (3) *The committee may invite such other observers or consultants, from within and beyond the Connexional Team, as appropriate.***
- (4) *All persons appointed to the committee shall initially be appointed for a period of three years and may be reappointed for a further period of no more than three years.***
- (5) *Nominations for the post of chair and deputy chair of the committee shall be brought to the Conference by a Nominations Group consisting of the Secretary of the Conference, the chair of the Methodist Council, and a District Chair nominated by the Chairs' Meeting.***

17. Methodist Council part 2

- (6) ***Nominations for the other members of the committee shall be brought to the Conference by a Nominations Group consisting of the Secretary of the Conference, the chair of the Mission Committee and a District Chair nominated by the Chairs' Meeting.***

1000A1 Mission Committee General Responsibilities

- (1) ***The committee shall report to the Methodist Council to enable the Church to develop and maintain a strategic vision for mission.***
- (2) ***The committee shall be accountable to the Conference through the Methodist Council for:***
- (i) ***developing and supporting the mission of the Church both locally and globally;***
 - (ii) ***developing, supporting and reviewing initiatives for nourishing, equipping, resourcing and accompanying those engaged in the mission of the Church both locally and globally.***
 - (iii) ***overseeing connexional policy for mission;***
 - (iv) ***determining the processes and overseeing, monitoring and evaluating the disbursement of grants or funds for mission in Britain;***
- (3) ***The committee may, in consultation with the Methodist Council, report to the Conference on matters of policy or process requiring the attention of the Conference.***

1000A2 Mission Committee Particular Provisions

- (1) ***The committee may convene resource groups and may recommend to the Connexional Team or the Methodist Council the establishment of other relevant bodies or consultations.***
- (2) ***The chair or deputy chair of the committee shall be a member of the Methodist Council, and of the Strategy and Resources Committee as may be agreed between them, and in either case the one may alternate for the other.***

335 Global Relationships Committee.

- (1) The Methodist Council shall annually appoint a Global Relationships Committee consisting of not more than ten members which shall report to the council through its Strategy and Resources ***the Mission Committee.***

*****RESOLUTION**

17/4. The Conference amends Standing Orders as set out above.

SECTION J CONFERENCE PLANNING EXECUTIVE

1. The Council noted that, for some time, there has been some uncertainty about the role and the remit of the bodies which are charged with various responsibilities in relation to the Conference itself. The Council therefore brings proposals to clarify where the decision-making responsibility lies in particular areas.
2. In 2009, the Council established a Conference Planning Executive with 'executive powers to make policy and practical decisions relating to the Conference as an event, with the intention of providing a forum where speedy direction and decision could be given on practical, administrative, organisational and financial matters.' However, although it has met in the intervening years, this Executive has never been established in Standing Orders. This has led to some confusion as to its role and its relationship to the other groups, particularly the Arrangements Committee (as set out in SO 140). When the Council established it, the Council heard about the need for it to bring together the various aspects of planning for the Conference, to ensure that it remained within budget and to provide policy direction. The Executive is a small group comprising the Secretary of the Conference (Chair), the Assistant Secretary of the Conference, the Chair of the Business Committee, a member of the Conference Financial Committee, a representative of the Connexional Team's management, the Events Co-ordinator (Secretary).
3. The Council believes that the situation could be clarified and, as the then Secretary suggested to the Council in 2009, 'decisions about Conference practicalities.... made in a timely and coherent manner' if the Council were to reaffirm the decision to create the Conference Planning Executive (CPE) and to ask that its role be included in the Standing Orders (Section 14). The Standing Orders will be clear that it is the CPE which has authority to make executive decisions about the venue and mode of meeting of the Conference, about the Ordinations and other public acts of worship, about expenditure (including allowances to representatives), and the Conference Exhibition, Fringe, and public lectures. The Standing Order relating to the Conference Arrangements

17. Methodist Council part 2

Committee (CAC) is also to be revised in order to remove any duplication with the tasks of the CPE, leaving the CAC responsible for the stewarding, technical details, and other practical arrangements of the Conference.

In order for the CPE to be effective and to make properly informed decisions, the Council agreed that its membership should be expanded to become:

- The Chair of the Business Committee (Representative Session)
- The Chair of the Business Committee (Presbyteral Session) [ie the Ex-President]
- The Events Coordinator
- The Secretary and Assistant Secretary
- The Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice
- The Connexional Treasurer
- The Connexional Secretary.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

17/5. The Conference receives the Report.

17/6. The Conference affirms the creation of the Conference Planning Executive and directs that its role be included in the Standing Orders.

SECTION K PEAKE TRUST

- 1.1 The Council received a report on the Peake Trust, which was established in 1932 in memory of Arthur Samuel Peake (1865–1929), a Methodist biblical scholar, who is particularly remembered for his one-volume commentary on the Bible (1919). The Trust was set up to be administered by staff and ex-students of Hartley College, later Hartley Victoria College. With the closure of Hartley Victoria College, the trustees were reduced in number to one, and there is now a need to appoint new trustees and review the terms of the Trust. The objects are: “to provide a permanent memorial to the late Doctor Arthur Samuel Peake late of Hartley College Manchester in grateful memory of his services of the said College and to the said Primitive Methodist Church and for the furtherance of Biblical studies and the assistance of students for the Methodist Ministry in association with the name of Dr A S Peake”.
- 1.2 On 31 August 2020 the Trust amounted to £6,056.18, held in the Central Finance Board. The terms of the original Trust restrict the use of the Trust’s money to interest only.

1.3 The continuation of the Trust will achieve the following ends:

- Acts as a reminder of the significant contribution of A S Peake to the life of Methodist Churches.
- Contribute to further ministerial and local preacher development in the North-West of England.
- Strengthen connections between biblical theology within higher education in Manchester and regional churches.

1.4 The Council brings the following recommendations to the Conference:

(a) The Conference appoints a new Trustee body, as follows:

- Dr Adrian Curtis
- Mr Peter Freeman
- The Revd Dr Svetlana Khobnya
- The Revd Dr Andrew Lunn
- Prof Peter Oakes
- The Revd Dr Simon Sutcliffe
- The Revd Dr Caroline Wickens
- The Revd Graham Sparkes to be an observer, with the intention of rotating every three years between a trustee from Nazarene Theological College and a trustee from Luther King Centre.

(b) The new Trustees, when appointed, consider amending the Regulations of the Trust and obtain the legal advice necessary to deal with any Charity Commission requirements to give effect to such proposed Regulations.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

17/7. The Conference receives the Report.

17/8. The Conference appoints a new trustee body for the A S Peake Memorial Trust as set out in paragraph 1.4(a) above and recommends that the new Trustees, when appointed, consider amending the current Regulations of the AS Peake Trust.

17. Methodist Council part 2

SECTION L METHODIST SCHOOLS COMMITTEE

Introduction

1. The adoption of *Transforming Lives* by the 2021 Conference provided affirmation, impetus and strategy for Methodist Schools. Much of the agenda of the Methodist Schools Committee since the Conference has been attending to the implementation of this 10-year plan and each of the Trusts has set its sights on achieving the ambitious vision of the report. This is being carried through in a context of the pandemic and its effects on children, staff and the communities served by our schools and with attention to the initiatives of the Methodist Church as it seeks to share in God's mission. *Our Calling* and a Methodist Way of Life continue to be central to framing and enacting the work of Methodist Schools and we have paid particular attention to the Presidential theme, 'God's Table: An Invitation for All', and to the developments of Church at the Margins, New Places for New People and the Walking with Micah project. All of these have deep resonance with *Transforming Lives* and are engaging Methodist schools in a variety of ways.
2. We are particularly excited to report that the plans for the first international Methodist Schools' Conference to be held in April 2023 are taking shape. This is a joint venture between the International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges and Universities (IAMSCU) and the Methodist Schools' Network to coincide with the 275th anniversary of the founding of Kingswood School. Our hope is that representatives, in person and online, from the thousands of Methodist Schools across the world will participate together in conversation, workshops and resource sharing to strengthen the work of all Methodist schools.

Joint Working and Initiatives

3. The Trusts have worked together in the following ways:
 - a. Actively engaging with the Methodist Schools Committee (MSC).
 - b. Undertaking, through the MSC, the necessary processes of discussion and identification of key areas of work required that enabled MSC to submit to Conference 2021 a Schools' educational strategy for the Church (*Transforming Lives*)
 - c. Through the Ethos Development Group, chaired by the Revd Peter Whittaker, sharing experience and needs across the Trusts.

- d. The website, www.methodistschools.org.uk launched in September 2017 has been added to with new resources for school worship, assemblies, governance and leadership, it is due for full review during the coming year.
- e. MAST webinars have been available to appropriate members of MIST schools to attend.
- f. MIST's safeguarding consultant has provided on-line training to appropriate members of MAST schools.
- g. MIST, MAST, EET, both severally and through MSC, continue to enjoy closer connection to the Connexional Team (especially through the Revd Dr Jonathan Dean, Director of Learning for Ministry).
- h. The MSC is developing an emerging map of where our Trusts interface with public policy and with other Methodist-founded organisations.
- i. Sharing expertise with Southlands and Roehampton: for example, the schools group contributing to teacher training sessions on diversity within Christianity, and Roehampton contributing specialist training for the webinars.
- j. Contributing their experience of green initiatives, from their different perspectives, to the Church's preparation for setting emissions targets to combat climate change.
- k. By sharing experience in the Trusts and the schools on adjusting to the pandemic crisis.
- l. MIST, MAST and EET have worked together to plan a major Conference in April 2023 for school leaders and trustees across the UK Methodist Schools network and together with the International Association of Methodist Colleges, Schools & Universities (IAMSCU). The main sponsors for the event are IAMSCU, MIST, Kingswood School and the Farmington Institute; it is being held in Bristol and Bath to mark the 275th anniversary of the founding of Kingswood School by John Wesley.
- m. MIST, MAST and EET have started a conversation with Action for Children to identify ways in which our respective work can be mutually supportive, especially in the arena of special educational needs.

MAST

4. Facts and Figures:

- The Methodist Church is a school provider in the state sector. The Council's responsibilities for the standards and ethos of its schools are delegated to MAST under SO342.
- The Council currently has responsibility for 66 Methodist maintained schools, educating approximately 15,000 children; for these schools, the Council, working through MAST, is registered with the Department for Education as a Religious Authority

17. Methodist Council part 2

- 26 of our schools are solely Methodist and the rest held in ecumenical partnership trust, most commonly (though not exclusively) with the Church of England. All are in the Primary phase.
 - About a half of the Methodist state schools are in the North West of England (predominantly in the Districts of Lancashire and Bolton and Rochdale), with the rest scattered across England covering, in all, 40 different Local Authorities and 18 Dioceses.
 - Currently 18% children are taught in schools which have become academies in non- Methodist groups; this requires a particular kind of MAST oversight to ensure that the academy chains are honouring the schools' Methodist Trust.
 - There have been few inspections and no verified published data since 2019. It is therefore not practicable to give statistical data on school performance although some commentary is included in the text.
5. The second phase of pandemic living brought mixed experiences for our schools, balancing the expectations of 'everything back to normal' with the realities of pandemic disruption. School communities returned to a more usual pattern of classroom learning with delight; maintaining this pattern has taken a considerable degree of determination. Staff and pupil illness and staff self-isolation have proved difficult to manage, with schools reporting, for example, 27 staff off in one day and pupil absence sometimes running at 20% (when a more usual average might be 5%). Even though our schools have (almost always) remained open, and are in many ways just as they were before the pandemic, not every pupil's learning journey has gone smoothly. Some activities, visits and visitors, have taken a long time to resume.
6. A lot of focus in the pandemic has been on the difficulties for older pupils, particularly in regard to termly examinations and assessments. Methodist state schools are effectively all in the Primary phase where the impacts have received less publicity but are very significant. In September 2021, for example, infant schools did not have a single year group that had experienced a year of 'proper' schooling – it was like having three year groups all starting school at the same time! Schools note the variable impacts of lockdown and home learning across the Primary phase on children's skills, socialisation and stamina for learning. Staff have been working to rebuild youngsters' fine motor skills, working on wrist strengthening and tri-partite grip. There has been increased demand for speech and language support, as well as the anticipated need for greater mental health and social and emotional provision.
7. Against this backdrop, the world of education has looked more towards 'business as usual'. There has been more movement in MAST school staffing as leaders who had delayed their retirement in 2020 took up their plans again. MAST

continues to support schools with appropriate recruitment and offers induction to the group for all new heads. With some interruptions, Ofsted resumed inspections; MAST has been pleased that schools that have been inspected have retained their grading, and some have improved. One school, the most vulnerable in the group with over 70% Free School Meals eligibility has moved to 'Good' after years of being at 'Requires Improvement'; this can be credited to a dynamic young headteacher and his staff, but also to support received from local MAST partners. The government's 'business as usual' agenda includes increased opportunities for schools if they become academies; this makes the close relationships within the Methodist family of schools particularly important.

8. As an organisation, MAST has continued the successful pattern of work established since 2019. During lockdown, a recognised strength was developed in the provision of training through webinars, in chaplaincy fellowship and strong pastoral relationships with schools. As education returned to more normal patterns, MAST took the opportunity to build on this success. The webinars have remained very popular, with one hitting our Zoom limit(!). Post return, lower live numbers are combined with high 'watch again' numbers, which might involve a whole school team in a staff meeting. The webinar programme intentionally focuses on training associated with having a Methodist trust deed; other topics are woven in according to demand. A session on protecting children online, for example, drew a lot of interest.
9. As the Head of Service moved to a part-time role, trustees took the opportunity to re-work the staffing structure using support from the Epworth Trust. This has allowed particularly for additional capacity in supporting school improvement through the work of a stronger and broader team. The more highly-developed work of the RLEs (Regional Leaders in Education – local school leaders taking on a supportive role for neighbouring Methodist Schools), has built on the strong MAST relationships established in covid time and remains the central platform for all our other work. MAST is now more known, more accessible and even more able to support – and the new chair has asserted a firm hold on the reins.
10. The Methodist Council has a particular responsibility for the ethos of its Methodist Schools; this is safeguarded through their inspection under Section 48 of the Education Act (2005). To deliver a robust and credible inspection schedule (SIAMS, the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) the Methodist Church works with the Education Office of the Church of England. In 2020 a decision was made to bring the coordination of all SIAMS inspections under a central team in order to improve management and reduce variability. To make change of this order is not an easy task and considerable

17. Methodist Council part 2

time was spent over the year in constructing systems and recruiting staff. Inspections were suspended for 18 months over the height of the pandemic and have had occasional interruptions since. Arrangements to deal with the backlog have been negotiated with the Department for Education but there is a considerable inspection mountain to climb and a significant minority of experienced inspectors have decided that they do not wish to return, post-pandemic. Notwithstanding this, and the anticipated hiccoughs of the new systems, SIAMS has made a strong return. MAST is picking up the increased need for training in SIAMS amongst our schools.

11. Our partnership working continues to yield rich results. The anti-racist resources for religious education, initiated by MAST and developed by REToday are now in use in at least 1400 schools. REToday have also picked up Gordon Brown's Walking with Micah lecture and frequently reference the Methodist Art Collection – with the result that 'Methodism' is a more recognised presence amongst the nation's very diverse RE teachers. There is something of a revolution going on in the world of RE as the focus shifts to 'world views' and non-faith perspectives; this makes it additionally important that Methodism retains its credibility at the RE table. MAST has also developed a prominence within the national schools chaplaincy organisation, the Centre for Chaplaincy in Education (CCfE), and receives strong support from CCfE in return.
12. MAST has not experienced a typical full financial year of activity since its set up. The first year was not a complete twelve months and the two subsequent years have been impacted by the pandemic although we have found new ways of building our contact with schools and stakeholders. As a result, it is possible to finance an overall six years of activity from our planned income. Our future spend is closely aligned to clear priorities of need and continued strengthening of our support to and development within the state-funded Methodist schools community.

MIST

13. Facts and Figures:
 - Most Methodist Independent Schools were established by groups of local Methodist communities in the nineteenth and early twentieth century following Wesley's pioneering opening of Kingswood School in 1748 followed by Wesley's successors opening the Wesleyan Academy at Woodhouse Grove in 1812.
 - In 1903 most of the schools were brought together by a common Trust Deed and under the ultimate control of the Board of Management for

Methodist Schools (BOM). BOM was superseded by the Methodist Independent Schools Trust (MIST) in 2011.

- There are currently 18 independent schools linked in some way to MIST: Trust Schools (8), Acquired Schools (3), Associated Schools (3), Affiliated Schools (4) – a full list and details can be found on the website: www.methodistschools.org.uk
 - MIST is directly responsible as Trustees for the 8 Trust Schools and as Sole Member of the Trusts of the 3 Acquired schools; the General Secretary of MIST is a Governor at the Associated Schools and one of the Affiliated Schools.
 - There are over 10,000 pupils on roll in Methodist Independent Schools.
 - Fourteen of the schools have boarders as well as day pupils.
 - Two of the schools are for children of nursery and primary age only, two have pupils from 11-18 only and the rest offer continuity of education from 3 to 18.
 - All of the schools are inspected by the Independent Schools Inspection Service (ISI) which reports to Ofsted; all such inspections in the past year have confirmed high standards in all the schools. Copies of independent school inspection reports are published on each school's website and at www.isi.net
 - Chairs of District are ex-officio Governors of any Methodist Independent Schools in their Districts.
 - In academic year 2020/21, MIST Trust and Acquired schools provided £5,440,000 in means-tested bursaries to help hundreds of children whose family circumstances would otherwise restrict access to attend the schools; these bursaries are funded by a mixture of funds raised from using school facilities out of term or school time and from diverting a proportion of the fees paid by all to support the costs of others. In addition, the Methodist Bursary Fund made awards for Methodist families attending Methodist Independent Schools of almost £100,000.
14. All the schools have had to adapt to new ways of working during the pandemic and adjusted to changes in advice as variants have come and gone. They have generally weathered the loss of income (especially from boarding and lettings income) as well as could have been expected but done so mainly due to support available from the furlough scheme and by cutting back severely on as many costs as possible, including capital expenditure. One small school, however, has been unable to survive these latest challenges; St Petroc's School in Bude was sold to a local independent special needs school in November 2021.

17. Methodist Council part 2

15. Since the last annual report, new Heads have been appointed at Ashville College (Rhiannon Wilkinson), Kent College Canterbury (Mark Turnbull), Kent College Pembury (Katrina Handford), Lorenden School (Richard McIntosh) and Queens College Taunton (Julian Noad). There are new Chairs at Lorenden School (Philip Harland) and Rydal Penrhos (Deborah McKinnel). New Chaplains have taken up their positions at Kingswood School (the Revd Katy Thomas) and Rydal Penrhos School (the Revd Bob Beamish). All such changes bring fresh vision and opportunity but also an element of instability which MIST works hard to minimise; the turnover in Heads has been especially marked in the last two years.
16. Many MIST meetings since late March 2020 have had to be held electronically but we were able to assemble for very enjoyable and informative Away Days in September 2021 at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine's; meeting one day with Chairs of Governors and Trustees with the second day being joined by Heads, Chaplains, leaders of MAST and EET and enjoyed a joint service of dedication with the President of Conference. The opportunity for electronic meetings has ensured regular group meetings by Zoom for Heads, Junior School Heads, Designated Safeguarding Leads, Chairs and Trustees.
17. Despite the impact of the pandemic, MIST is making progress with elements of its new Group Plan for 2020-25 in which we are committed to *developing a culture that encourages and enables collaboration, communication and co-operation between the schools and MIST*. The plan seeks to *deliver a financially sustainable, inclusive education that is focused strongly on both the individual and the community experience, shaped by Christian values*. Specifically, progress continues to be made with collaboration opportunities between MIST, MAST and the Epworth Trust; a "SIAMS for MIST schools" is being developed, known as SERVE¹; a review of bursary and scholarship policies; and identifying ways in which MIST and the schools can support the objectives of the *Transforming Lives* report.
18. Methodist Independent Schools are determined to continue to provide an all-round education infused with a strong Christian ethos informed by their Methodist foundation in an era of political, economic and social scepticism, uncertainty and change. Methodist Independent Schools are committed to doing everything within their power to increase the number of bursaries available to enable the offer of places to as wide a cross section of the community as possible. Financial support provides life-changing opportunities for a number of pupils as schools partner with the Royal Springboard Foundation (www.royalspringboard.org.uk) and in schools with

1 SERVE stands for: Spiritual, Ethos, Relationships and Values Education

specific programmes such as The Leys' "Gift of Education" and Woodhouse Grove's commitment to the One In A Million Academy in Bradford. The likelihood of business rates relief being withdrawn and the possibility of VAT being applied to school fees threaten to make them less, rather than more, affordable. In the meantime, MIST uses resources carefully to support schools in need of specific help and others that now feel confident to plan essential investment.

Epworth Education Trust

19. Facts and Figures:

- There are currently six schools within the Epworth Education Trust (EET) all of which are primary schools.
- Three schools have nursery provision, two of which provide education for 2 year olds alongside provision for 3 year olds and 4 year olds. An additional school has submitted an application to open a nursery.
- The schools are all solely Methodist Schools based in the North West of England.
- There are approximately 1500 pupils on roll in the schools.
- There are 230 staff across the Trust.
- EET is commissioned to lead the Westleigh Start Well Family Centre in Wigan. Managing the support for the most vulnerable families and providing some of the safeguarding offer for approximately 25% of the 0-5s in Wigan.
- Within the Trust, with the exception of the sponsored school, all schools are at least good. Two have the highest grading of outstanding.
- All schools are subject to a SIAMS and they are all judged good or better. Four of the schools have the highest grading of Outstanding/ Excellent.

20. The pandemic has continued to place challenge within our schools and this reflects the national picture. The challenges have evolved and changed during the year but has included supporting our most vulnerable pupils during lockdown, academic performance challenges created through lost learning and staff absences. School leaders have found this period particularly difficult and exhausting as they did not have a full break for almost 20 months whilst providing track and trace within each school holiday and also managing the day to day challenges they were experiencing during the term time. Our Methodist ethos continues to shape our work in this area as we have endeavoured to overcome any barriers pupils and families faced during this time including the provision of food parcels, additional pastoral support, or access to technology and showing care and compassion in all that we do. Parents continue to recognise our strength in this area. We are aware that for many of our school

17. Methodist Council part 2

community the only experience of the Christian faith and the Methodist Church is through the life of school. As such, the schools continue to be the church in action through bringing hope into these situations.

21. We have been determined that the pandemic will not limit our pupils' opportunities in the future and have provided significant resource to close any academic gaps that may have emerged during this period, this has been alongside enhanced pastoral support. There is still much to do but we continue to move forward.
22. Staff well-being has remained a priority and focus throughout the pandemic. At the start of the new academic year an enhanced well-being offer has been provided for all staff to support good mental and physical well-being. We recognise that flourishing staff create flourishing children which is a key driver for the Trust. The well-being offer has been well received by all.
23. The last year has witnessed the strengthening collaboration across our family of schools as we have developed closer working relationships with each other. Whilst working within the limitations that the pandemic has created, we have still met regularly to disseminate best practise and share ideas and resource. A new Director of Education (DoE) role was established in September which has further enabled the Trust to support schools. The DoE has provided practical support and training opportunities including a bespoke aspiring leaders course which has been a huge success.
24. As a Trust we have seen some changes in leadership across the Trust. There has been a new Headteacher at Wesley (Rhys Jones) and a new Head of School at Bedford Hall (Lisa Whittaker), and there is an acting Headteacher at Westleigh leave (Karen Chadwick), whilst the Headteacher is on maternity leave. As a Trust we continue to ensure new leaders are mentored and supported to lead our schools well.
25. During the last twelve months we have seen an increase in pupils known to have Special Educational Needs (SEND) across the Trust and this has been a significant increase in some schools. Rosehill opened a 'resourced provision' in September providing specialist support for up to 10 pupils identified to have SEND with many having a diagnosis of autism. Summerseat now has over 30% of their pupils with SEND and over 10% have a diagnosis of autism. We strongly believe this increase is linked to pupils joining our schools knowing we have an inclusive ethos and will support every child to flourish, no matter what the barriers.
26. Summerseat joined our Trust in December 2020 as the first sponsored academy following their Ofsted inspection. Since joining the Trust the school

has made significant progress and is now providing a good quality of education to all pupils. This rapid progress reflects the Trust's commitment to ensuring all pupils have the best possible school experience. We are proud of the difference we have made in the school. This, alongside many other aspects of our approach, has led to a growing reputation with the Department for Education.

27. We were immensely proud to celebrate one of our newly qualified teachers, Zoe Leyland, being a silver winner at the Pearsons Awards for Outstanding New Teacher of the Year. They talked about her impact being palpable not only in her own classroom but across the school. We congratulate Zoe on this incredible recognition but also reflect upon the outstanding impact our staff make across our schools as they relentlessly and passionately 'do all they can' for our pupils and for each other.
28. Last summer we embarked on a Trust wide project with Edukid in which schools sponsored children in Uganda to support their education. The schools have embraced the project and the staff in all schools have also committed to sponsoring an additional child. The project has enabled the pupils to embrace the notion of the world as their parish and provide care and Christian support to children experiencing some of the most traumatic of experiences such as being a child soldier or orphan. The children have been able to meet through Zoom and to understand each other's cultures and build up connections. The children have recognised that whilst their lives are very different, they have much in common.
29. Collective worship has continued to play a central role in the life of our schools. The schools welcomed the return to in person collective worship in the autumn term. Headteachers reported children singing with increased passion as the joy of collective worship and singing was appreciated freshly. The prayer spaces within the schools support the pupils' ability to explore their faith and communicate with God if they seek to. Pupils find worship a strong root that guides them in managing many of the situations they experience; the exploration and demonstration of the Christian faith helps them in grounding their own belief systems and faith. Chaplains continue to play a pivotal role in this work providing a strong link and joined up working between our schools and the church.
30. As the Trust has stabilised organisationally following the merger in November 2020, the Trust board committed to welcoming more schools into the Trust and a growth strategy was developed. Aligning with this was a message emerging from the Government regarding their aspiration that all schools

17. Methodist Council part 2

belong to a family of schools in a Multi Academy Trust. As a result, there has been significant interest from schools exploring academisation, and two of our Methodist schools have applied to join the Trust. As the Trust grows to become a National Trust we welcome schools across the country, as this is different from the majority of Trusts that have a limited geographical spread. We are working with the government department responsible for academies, the Regional School Commissioner (RSC), to manage this effectively. We are looking to establish hubs of schools that can work closer together to overcome any geographical barriers.

***RESOLUTION

17/9. The Conference receives the Report.

SECTION M CONVERSION THERAPY POLICY

The Methodist Conference in 2021, adopted the following reply to Memorial M20 and agreed an immediate and complete ban on Conversion Therapy anywhere within the Methodist Church in Britain.

The Birmingham District Synod (Present: 152; Voting: 124 for, 7 against) notes that the current UK Government committed some time ago to banning so-called 'gay conversion therapy' as soon as possible. Whilst there has been a lot of debate about what constitutes this practice, the 'Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK' revised and agreed in July 2019 (<https://www.bacp.co.uk/events-and-resources/ethics-and-standards/mou/>) offers the most significant and widely supported definition. Up to now, 20 health, counselling and psychotherapy organisations have signed up, including the Association of Christian Counsellors.

The Memorandum defines conversion therapy as follows: 'Conversion therapy' is an umbrella term for a therapeutic approach, or any model or individual viewpoint that demonstrates an assumption that any sexual orientation or gender identity is inherently preferable to any other, and which attempts to bring about a change of sexual orientation or gender identity, or seeks to suppress an individual's expression of sexual orientation or gender identity on that basis. It goes on to say the practice of conversion therapy, whether in relation to sexual orientation or gender identity, is unethical and potentially harmful.

The Synod notes that in 2017 the General Synod of the Church of England endorsed a statement in similar terms and called on the Archbishops' Council to become a co-signatory

to the statement on behalf of the Church of England. The Synod shares the view that the practice of conversion therapy is unethical and potentially harmful and contrary to the Methodist values set out in the connexional Definition and Guidance on Homophobia.

It therefore requests the Conference:

- (1) to support and adopt the Memorandum of Understanding's definition of conversion therapy as quoted above,*
- (2) to call on all Methodists to refuse to offer, or participate in offering, conversion therapy in any form, and*
- (3) to use its good offices to press the UK Government to proceed to ban conversion therapy without further delay.*

Reply

The Conference thanks the Birmingham Synod for its memorial and shares the concerns raised in regard to the practise of 'Conversion Therapy'.

The Conference in 1993 agreed the following resolution:

'Conference recognises, affirms and celebrates the participation and ministry of lesbians and gay men in the church. Conference calls on the Methodist people to begin a pilgrimage of faith to combat repression and discrimination, to work for justice and human rights and to give dignity and worth to people whatever their sexuality'.

The Conference notes that in 2021 the Methodist Council Report MC21/50: Deliverance Ministry endorsed the following recommendation:

'Deliverance ministry must not be used to attempt to change a recipient's sexual orientation or gender identity'.

The Conference notes that 'Conversion Therapy' would be totally incompatible with the previously agreed resolutions described above and would be contrary to the Methodist values set out in the Connexional Definition and Guidance on Homophobia.

The Conference agrees:

- (1) to support and adopt the 'Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK' definition of conversion therapy as quoted above,*
- (2) to call on all Methodists to refuse to offer or participate in offering conversion therapy in any form.*
- (3) that no conversion therapy can take place in the name of the Methodist Church.*

17. Methodist Council part 2

The Conference directs the Methodist Council to consider, draft and publish a policy on 'Conversion Therapy' in light of points (1) to (3) of this response. The Conference calls on the UK Government to ban 'Conversion Therapy' without further delay and therefore also directs the Methodist Council to consider further the most appropriate way in which to engage with HM Government on this issue.

Introduction

This policy is based on the Conference response to the Memorial (M20) brought by the Birmingham Synod (shown above).

Definition

The Methodist Church has adopted the 'Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK (bacp.co.uk).

The MoU defines conversion therapy as:

'Conversion therapy' is an umbrella term for a therapeutic approach, or any model or individual viewpoint that demonstrates an assumption that any sexual orientation or gender identity is inherently preferable to any other, and which attempts to bring about a change of sexual orientation or gender identity, or seeks to suppress an individual's expression of sexual orientation or gender identity on that basis.

The MoU further states:

'the practice of conversion therapy, whether in relation to sexual orientation or gender identity, is unethical and potentially harmful.'

Why is this policy important

Sexuality is a core aspect of what it means to be a human being created in love by God. Since 1979, reports on sexuality to the Methodist Conference have noted a diversity of sexual and, more recently, gender identities, and the Methodist Church has continued to develop its theological understanding of what it means to be human in the light of the widening understanding of the diversity of human sexuality.

In 1992 the Methodist Conference affirmed that “every person has infinite value before God”, that God has “made nothing in vain” and loves all that God has made². In 1993 it agreed the following resolution:

‘Conference recognises, affirms and celebrates the participation and ministry of lesbians and gay men in the church. Conference calls on the Methodist people to begin a pilgrimage of faith to combat repression and discrimination, to work for justice and human rights and to give dignity and worth to people whatever their sexuality’.

In 2021 the Methodist Council report MC/21/50: Deliverance Ministry endorsed the following recommendation:

‘Deliverance ministry must not be used to attempt to change a recipient’s sexual orientation or gender identity’.

‘Conversion Therapy’ is totally incompatible with the previously agreed resolutions described above and would be contrary to the Methodist values set out in the Connexional Definition and Guidance on Homophobia.

Pastoral Support and Conversation

It is important to note that this policy does not prohibit pastoral conversation with an individual in regard to their gender or sexual identity. The purpose of pastoral care is to help support someone in dealing with the realities they are facing, someone who may be unsure or feeling unhappy in regard to their sexual or gender identity. Conversations need to be an open exploration with no significance being placed on any particular perceived outcome as being preferable.

Legal Context

At the time of writing this policy the government has stated that it will introduce a legislative ban on the practice of conversion therapy. It is important to note, should the government introduce legislation that includes a conscience clause, the position of the Methodist Church in Britain is for a complete ban, and therefore this policy will still apply.

A consultation process was undertaken by the government to seek views on its proposals to ban conversion therapy practices, which in the main affect people from the LGBT community.

² The 1992 Conference Statement on A Christian Understanding of Family Life, the Single Person and Marriage p.29, emphasised in the 2019 God in Love Unites Us report para 1.5.7.

17. Methodist Council part 2

The consultation sought views on a set of proposed measures that would apply to England and Wales, as follows:

- A ban on conversion therapy – introducing a new criminal offence alongside sentence uplifts for existing offences
- A package of support for victims, restricting promotion of conversion therapies, removing profit streams, and strengthening the case for disqualification from holding a senior role in a charity
- Introducing Conversion Therapy Protection Orders to protect potential victims from undergoing the practice including overseas
- Exploring further measures to prevent the promotion and advertisement of conversion therapy

The Methodist Church's Response to the Consultation:

The Methodist Church formally responded to the consultation, stating:

'The Methodist Church, therefore, welcomes the commitment of the Government to introduce legislation in 2022. We support a ban on Conversion Therapy and welcome the measures to support those at risk in this country and abroad.

In adopting the Memorandum of Understanding of Conversion Therapy our position is that any conversion theory assumes that a particular sexual orientation or gender identity is preferable. This assumption is at odds with our position affirming dignity and worth to people whatever their sexuality or gender. Therefore, we ask the Government to remove the conscience clause for over 18's and ban conversion therapy in all situations.'

Further Information and Support

Any congregation or minister of another Church using a Methodist building under MT14(2A) must be made aware of and signal agreement to this policy, and any report of a group using Methodist premises and engaging in conversion therapy must be reported to a Superintendent Minister, District Chair, and District Safeguarding Officer.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

17/10. The Conference receives the Report.

17/11. The Conference adopts the Report including the policy as its further reply to Memorial M20 (2021).

SECTION N MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

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* will help 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 three times since the 2021 Conference on 7 September 2021, 5–6 February 2022 and 11 May 2022.

17. Methodist Council part 2

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 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 Centre for Ministerial Formation includes those Methodist students (about half of the total in that Centre) accepted as student ministers for initial training, who learn and undergo that formation in community with their Anglican counterparts and some students from other denominations and traditions, in a fully ecumenical setting. Over the last year there have been lessons and new skills learned which will help to continue with developments which had already begun, especially in online and hybrid forms of teaching, learning and formation. The allocations process took place through online conversations in May, with each recommended candidate discussing their hopes and needs. Over the last two years Queen's has seen the advantage of having the conversation online, as well as any necessary conversations between the Church's Well-being Adviser and recommended candidates, and is likely to seek to continue that practice.
6. The majority of student ministers are studying on accredited programmes from Durham University's Common Awards suite, as part of their overall formational programme. A pathway has now been created, and is being tested, through which part-time students can engage with the Durham MA programme in a way that had not previously been possible. Some students with particular learning needs are being supported through public DSA (Disabled Students Allowance) provision (one of the key benefits for Queen's of registration with the Office for Students).
7. A review of the Circuit-based Learning Pathway (CBLP) has been conducted on behalf of the CBLP Implementation Group and the Ministries Committee, in the programme's fifth year. Many of the student ministers who had been on

this pathway have passionately recommended it and the Ministries Committee has confirmed Circuit-based Learning as one of the three core pathways for ministerial training. Work continues to develop the programme further and to find ways to extend its benefits, particularly to diaconal students.

8. The Queen's Foundation continues to work with probationers on the programme of probation studies designed to build on their pre-ordination training. All the first year probationers have chosen to seek permission to fulfil the studies element of their probation at least in part through Queen's, whether on accredited or non-accredited routes. Queen's has further streamlined the processes in place as additional support for those writing dissertations beyond probation studies. There were some outstanding dissertations written at BA and MA level during 2020-21 by probationers. This is work many would not have been able to continue without this particular pattern of probation studies. This is good news for individuals and for scholarship across the Methodist Church.
9. The Queen's Foundation Oversight tutors are responsible for overseeing the progress of student ministers through initial training and formation, and that responsibility is worked out through the Queen's Foundation Oversight Committee. This consists of over 40 people from across the Connexion, who act as accompanists to student ministers, bringing their varied local experience as well as pastoral skills and they act as a constructive critical voice for and to the tutorial staff. There was a significant discussion and further consultation during the year on 'Ministerial Formation in the Context of Black Lives Matter and supporting anti-racist practice'.
10. Methodist staff appointed to the Queen's Foundation continue to make wider contributions to the life of the Connexion beyond initial ministerial training and probation studies. During the year Methodist tutors have also sat on the Faith and Order Committee (including working parties on particular topics), the New Places for New People Guiding Team, and the *Holiness* editorial board among others and they contribute to societies and conferences in a range of disciplines. A number are invited each year to lead study days, or preach and lead worship around the Connexion. There is regular engagement with the Methodist Studies Seminars and Queen's remains one of the core institutions sharing the hosting of the Seminars. Staff at Queen's have engaged with and resourced conferences such as 'Dismantling Whiteness' and 'Beyond Masculinities'.
11. The Centre for Discipleship and Theology is now in place in its expanded form to oversee the growing number of independent students, to expand the range and type of programmes offered and to provide input and insights about e-learning across the whole of Queen's. The Centre for Continuing Ministerial Development

17. Methodist Council part 2

(CCMD) is also benefitting from new pathway possibilities and developments in online learning. A small number of Methodist ministers are using Queen's courses and pathways for Continuing Development in Ministry, especially provision for Masters level work, including in Black Theology.

12. The Centre for Black Theology (CBT) launched a new undergraduate pathway within the Common Awards programme, focused on Black theology and especially targeted at Black Majority Church members and leaders. The undergraduate pathway adds to the CBT taster courses as well as MA provision that foregrounds Black Theology within a (Newman University) course in Theology and Transformative Practice. CBT is also working with a number of new doctoral research students, supporting them with a specialised 'Bridging into PhD' programme.

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. A range of programmes validated by the University of Manchester is currently available. All courses have been delivered online and the College has invested in IT hardware and software to enable this. In addition three PhDs have been successfully completed. A decision has been taken to consolidate the BA Theology and Ministry and BA Mission and Ministry programmes into a new single undergraduate degree and it is expected that the new programme will begin in 2022-23.
15. The overall success of the year is reflected in a strong result in this year's National Student Survey (NSS). This is completed by undergraduate students in their final year of study and covers a range of areas relating to the student experience. Cliff achieved an overall satisfaction rating of 97%, which is a testament to the hard work and caring approach of staff across the College community.
16. The vision of Cliff College is to be a beacon of excellence for training in mission and evangelism, serving the Church especially in the UK, but also internationally. This is achieved through:
 - a range of validated courses and programmes with mission and evangelism at their core;

- short courses, schools and Cliff Local serving the needs of lay people in the Church;
 - evangelists acting as a catalyst for mission and evangelism in the Church;
 - an annual Festival offering a vibrant programme for all ages;
 - the Cliff Year offering young people a year of vocational exploration;
 - the conference centre providing accommodation for individuals and groups;
 - Global Partnerships supporting lay and ordained training across the globe;
 - a series of resources promoting the themes of mission and evangelism.
17. The College continues to celebrate and treasure its relationship with the Methodist Church and works in partnership with the Church in a wide variety of ways. The following are a few examples:
- The College continues to work with the Ministries Team, in the delivery and support of *Worship: Leading and Preaching*;
 - Working alongside the Evangelism and Growth team, and with members of the team embedded in the Cliff staff, to ensure a co-ordinated approach as the *God for All* strategy is implemented across the Connexion;
 - As part of the online Methodist Studies Seminars, hosting the Fernley Hartley Lecture which was the keynote paper of a seminar 'Racism and the Methodist Church: Going Beyond a Theology of Good Intentions';
 - The Bible, Gender and Church Research Centre held an online seminar entitled 'Lies Abusers Tell: Weaponisation of the Bible in the Home' on issues of violence against women and wider gender injustice;
 - The Centre for the Study of Youth, Children and Families (YCF) Mission and Ministry has been established to provide a space for research and conversations on evangelical approaches to ministry and mission among YCF, including a focus on how they are integrated into the life of the Church. A forum took place on 11 October exploring the theme of childhood and evangelicalism;
 - The Learning Innovation Team has continued to explore new technologies and pedagogies that can aid and assist online and hybrid learning. Some of this research was presented at the Digital Theology conference at Durham University in July 2021. This will form the basis for further development for Cliff teaching in the coming years, as well as providing a resource to wider Methodism for thinking about effective online learning.
18. The Revd Leslie M Newton and The Revd Dr Raj Patta have been appointed to the Cliff College Committee this year to replace retiring members.
19. 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

17. Methodist Council part 2

enables it to support the work of the Connexional Team in many ways. It will continue to work alongside its 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.

Methodist Church in Britain and Cliff College – Shared Mission Plan

20. This work is now complete and the mission plan is in place.

HE Awards

21. 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; 11 at Doctoral level and nine at Masters. For 2nd year funding, 13 students are at doctoral level and five at Masters. Seven students are from global majority countries or minority ethnic backgrounds and several people are working in areas that will benefit the Churches' Justice Dignity and Solidarity work. The Revd Novette S Headley has been appointed to the panel which scrutinises the awards applications.

Continuing Development in Ministry

22. The strategy for Continuing Development in Ministry (CDiM) contains five main recommendations, four of which are complete. One recommendation is outstanding, relating to the provision of 'new' money which ministers may claim for CDiM purposes. Because of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on finances, and thus future budget-planning, not to mention the huge disruption it has caused in when and how ministers may undertake CDiM, the Ministries Team with the approval of the Ministries Committee concluded that this recommendation could not be an urgent current priority. Work has now begun on its implementation.

Methodist-related Education Institutions

23. The Director of Learning for Ministry has continued work to strengthen the connection of the Connexional Team with Methodist-related Education Institutions. New frameworks for partnership have been established between the Connexional Team and Wesley House, which culminated in a new Memorandum of Understanding being drawn up with the trustees, and this was approved by the Ministries Committee.

Global Theological Education

24. New relationships are being developed through Cliff College and the Queen's Foundation. Cliff College is now a world leader in online learning with the TheologyX platform which has continued to be developed and its implementation as Cliff's own online Learning Management System has provided many opportunities to test and improve new features. COVID-19 restrictions meant that all planned travel did not take place, and so the work with global partners was primarily focused on technological support. For example, Wesley University, Ondo, Nigeria, and United Theological College, Harare, Zimbabwe, have received significant support, being assisted in the set-up of some online educational facilities. Working alongside Church Can and Global Relationships, the Methodist Church in Sierra Leone was assisted in setting up a media and communications hub. Cliff College has begun to develop its own content for TheologyX, as a training resource for the wider Church and has prioritised time for the development and creation of such materials for its global partners.
25. The generosity of the Methodist Church has enabled the Queen's Foundation to develop work with theological educators in the global South, in the Partnership in Theological Education Project, focused on work with the ecumenical Theological College of Lanka (TCL) and the Free Methodist Church's training institution in Rwanda, Kibagora Polytechnic. This work has become part of a newly re-structured Centre for Research and Global Partnerships at Queen's.

LAY MINISTRY

Worship: Leading and Preaching - Development of Worship Leaders and Preachers

26. The 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. Whilst many have embraced involvement in hybrid forms of worship, others have reported a sense of disorientation as chapels remain closed and their role in circuit life has diminished. Amongst the considerable number of local preachers and worship leaders in training, there is a tangible sense of hope and enthusiasm for service in a changing Church.
27. It is almost 10 years since the 2012 Conference agreed to introduce a new approach to theological education for local preachers, worship leaders and other lay ministries in the Church. Since that time, the Worship: Leading and Preaching (WLP) course has continued to evolve, the emphasis being on improving accessibility and ease of use – removing obstacles to learning.

17. Methodist Council part 2

It is now well established as one of the key resources for the encouragement of theological literacy across the Church.

28. Since the third version of the online learning platform, WLP 3.0 went live in September 2020, over 500 students have enrolled on this version and feedback from students and their tutors has been most encouraging. The key aim of encouraging formative dialogue between students and tutors through full use of online assessment has been realised, and evidence suggests a much higher standard of theological reflection in portfolio submissions. Feedback from users has been overwhelmingly positive, particularly around the reduced complexity of portfolios.
29. A positive side-effect of COVID-19 has been the rapid adoption and acceptance of online technology. This had a transformative effect on the availability and reach of online support for local preachers and worship leaders in training. Explore Online, which was launched to replace the cancelled Summer School in August 2020, was run for the fourth time in January 2022. This event will probably evolve into a series of shorter evening or weekend events to improve access to students. The Summer School at Cliff College will restart in August 2022, COVID-19 permitting.
30. After a one-year pause due to COVID-19, the WLP in a Year programme restarted in September 2021, with eight students aiming to complete their studies as part of a fast-track cohort. Group sessions are facilitated by the Learning Network with input from Cliff College. The format is a blend of residential weekends and online learning and is designed with the needs of potential ordination candidates in mind.
31. With the support of the Forces Board, a local preacher training pathway for those in the Armed Forces has been established. The East Solent and Downs Circuit generously acts as the host circuit and their Tutor provides remote support to students, with armed forces chaplains acting as Mentors.
32. The Local Preachers' Study Board (LPSB) has fully embraced the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (JDS) strategy, and a sub-group has been established to advise on improvements to training and development. Its remit includes course content, ways of delivering training, and how best to support the Cultural and Language Fellowships in empowering those called to lead worship and preach. The LPSB recognises a lack of diversity particularly in key training roles, and is working with the JDS team, to fill the gaps in available data, and to target areas for improvement.

33. As of January 2022, there were 5,698 active local preachers recorded on the connexional database, a decline from 5,952 the previous year.

Of those in training:

- 376 had a Note to Preach (2021: 405), and there were 492 persons On Trial as local preachers (2021: 655).
- 156 portfolios were successfully completed on the *Worship: Leading and Preaching* course in 2021, compared with 187 the previous year. Of these, 10 were from worship leaders (2020: 14), who have successfully completed modules 1-4. 75 were LP Portfolio A, (2020: 89), and 71 were LP Portfolio B, (2020: 84) indicating completion of LP training.
- During the year, 46 new students enrolled as worship leaders, and 307 as local preachers. (Previously 80 and 155 respectively).
- 202 new local preachers were accredited during 2021, as indicated by the number of President's Letters requested, a significant and encouraging increase from 108 in 2020.

The deaths of 346 local preachers were reported during the year.

34. The Faith and Worship course came to an end in 2021, a final 26 portfolios undergoing assessment. Thanks and appreciation are due to the tutors, mentors, assessors, authors and others who supported the thousands of students who completed the course and who have served and continue to serve as preachers throughout the Connexion. A service of thanksgiving was held at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster on 17 October 2021.

Memorial M4 (2021) Review of Standing Order 563(2)(vi)

35. The Conference's reply to Memorial M4 (2021) from the Manchester Circuit required the Ministries Committee to review Standing Order 563(2)(vi) related to the local preacher's responsibility for arranging a substitute if they were unable to take an appointment themselves. The text of that Memorial and its reply are reproduced below:

M4 Local Preachers

The Manchester (19/1) Circuit Meeting (Present: 41; Voting: 40 for, 0 against) notes that Standing Order 563(2)(vi) creates a duty on local preachers "if unable to fulfil an appointment, to arrange for a suitable substitute, informing the Superintendent and a church steward of the Local Church concerned" and that this is often reproduced on the plan as a reminder to local preachers.

17. Methodist Council part 2

The Meeting notes that the SO does not take into account the circumstances that may lead a preacher to be unable to take an appointment such as illness or bereavement, and that as it stands this SO can place additional stress on preachers, especially when dealing with mental health issues.

In practice, the Circuit, through the Superintendent Minister often takes responsibility for finding a substitute or making other arrangements when a preacher faces these circumstances.

However, the Circuit Meeting believes that our Standing Orders should model best practice and be pastorally sensitive. It therefore calls upon the Conference to amend the SO to achieve this and suggests the following wording:

(vi) if unable to fulfil an appointment, except through illness or bereavement, to arrange for a suitable substitute, informing the Superintendent and a church steward of the Local Church concerned.

If unable to fulfil an appointment through illness or bereavement, to inform the Superintendent who will make alternative arrangements.

The Circuit Meeting also invites the Conference to encourage Circuits wherever possible to have contingency plans in place for such occasions to assist the Superintendent and to encourage preachers to rise to the challenge of standing in in emergencies whenever possible.

Reply

The Conference thanks the Manchester Circuit for its memorial and agrees that pastoral best practice should be reflected in our Standing Orders.

The Conference recognises that the existing wording of 563(2)(vi) may be seen to place an additional burden on local preachers at a difficult time It also recognises that in practice, the Superintendent Minister has to make alternative arrangements.

The Conference celebrates that many Circuits already have in place contingency plans for such occasions and expresses its appreciation to local preachers and ministers who rise to the challenge of standing in in emergencies.

However, the Conference also recognises that illness and bereavement may not be the only legitimate causes of a crisis preventing a local preacher from fulfilling their obligations.

The Conference therefore declines the memorial but directs the Ministries Committee to review Standing Order 563(2)(vi) and report to the 2022 Conference

36. The Committee reviewed the Standing Order in view of the concerns expressed in the Memorial. The current wording is generic, and recognises that there may be many legitimate reasons why a local preacher cannot fulfil an appointment.

563(2)(vi) if unable to fulfil an appointment, to arrange for a suitable substitute, informing the Superintendent and a church steward of the Local Church concerned;

37. Introducing specific situations (such as illness or bereavement) could create more questions than it answers and reduces scope for pastoral discretion. Further, the change suggested by the Memorial may have the effect of increasing the pressure on Local Preachers who are unavailable for entirely different, but legitimate reasons. If the intention of the Memorial is to relieve the pressure on an unavailable Local Preacher who cannot themselves arrange a substitute, then the following suggested wording will address this and should encourage dialogue with the Superintendent and stewards, thereby encouraging a collaborative resolution.

563(2)(vi) if unable to fulfil an appointment, to arrange **if possible** for a suitable substitute, **whilst** informing the Superintendent and a church steward of the Local Church concerned, **or, where unable through illness or other significant reason to arrange a suitable substitute, to notify this to the Superintendent (or their delegate), who shall then arrange for a suitable substitute and inform a church steward of the Local Church concerned;**

Accredited Prior Experience and Learning (APEL) for Worship: Leading and Preaching

38. An APEL process was provided when the WLP course was introduced. The upgrade of WLP to version 3.0 and increased availability of video conferencing enabled a thorough overhaul of the application process. The Committee approved a new APEL process as recommended by the Board of Studies and asked the Ministries team to embed this in its processes.

Local Preachers' Board of Studies

39. The Committee appointed Mr Andrew Maisey to the Local Preachers' Board of Studies.

17. Methodist Council part 2

Chaplaincy

40. The Committee received a detailed report from the Ministry Development Officer and celebrated the progress that they had made with the chaplaincy work which is being embedded in all areas of church life including the ecumenical work, the inter-faith work and other non-church contexts. The chaplaincy section of the Methodist website has been updated to include a *Chaplaincy Resources and Links* page and a *Chaplaincy Learning and Development* section. The *Methodist Chaplaincy Forum* will provide a place for the Methodist Church to coordinate its work in support of chaplaincy, working with other organisations through the Forum and providing a roundtable to link chaplaincy work in its widest sense. *Connecting Chaplains* opportunities have been created in partnership with others. The training resource *Chaplaincy Everywhere* has been redeveloped and is being relaunched, with new videos. This resource continues to be highly regarded in many places and is often used as a foundation for other organisations' training.

Supervision for Lay Officers in the Methodist Church

41. In the Supervision Report to the 2021 Conference, the Connexional Team was mandated during 2021-22 to gather data on existing lay roles and to propose a costed plan of management and reflective supervision appropriate to the type of role and the number of hours worked. A data collection process took place and there was a further discussion with the Supervision Reference Group. The Ministries Committee:
- directed that all people who are going to become supervisees should be offered an introduction to supervision via the Learning Network.
 - directed that, whilst noting that there are a limited number of Supervisors who are trained in facilitating group supervision, that supervision may be offered either 1-1 or in a group, as permitted within the policy (see 3.5.1 in the supervision policy).
 - directed the Ministries Team to remind the circuits and districts that the 2021 Conference directed that all Local Lay Pastors and pioneers working 0.5 full time equivalent (fte) or more should be in Supervision by September 2022.
 - recommended to the Council that all Local Lay Pastors and Pioneers working less than 0.5 fte should be in Supervision (proportional to the hours they work, as set out in the Supervision policy) by September 2023.
 - directed that a person with a significant pastoral or representative responsibility (eg Lay Employee, Children's worker, family and community worker), should be in (locally organised and recorded on the District

Supervision Implementation Plan) supervision according to the following timetable:

Hours worked per week	Target: Timescale to be in Supervision
30+ hours	By September 2024
20+ hours	By September 2025
15+ hours	By September 2026
Working up to 15 hours	By September 2027

- directed that any Supervision costs for lay employees should be regarded as a cost to the employing body and will need to be budgeted for locally.
- recommended that Supervision training for supervisors of lay employees should be provided by our established training teams and funded by the employing churches, circuits or districts.
- requested that the Strategy and Resources Committee be asked to consider how that might be implemented.
- directed the Ministries Team to remind churches and circuits of their responsibility to ensure that lay employees are in regular, reflective, line management in accordance with existing church guidelines and encouraged them to actively seek out training provided by the Learning Network when Line Managers are appointed.

VOCATIONS

General

42. Elements of the vocations work that were initially aspirational are now embedded within the work of the Connexional Team. A range of resources has been created and events have worked well online. Encounter will now be offered online by the Learning Network across the whole Connexion. This will be part of a suite of learning and development opportunities and resources on discerning vocation that will be open to all. Vocations work focusing on an Exploration Year has been worked on jointly with the Learning Network and the Ministries Team. Exploring Ordained Ministry days have moved online and the taught elements of the on-site day are now available as films on the YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/MethodistChurchinGB>. Work has been aimed at broadening vocational support and encouraging all who feel they have a call to any aspect of ministry to pursue it. A social media campaign *Love This Calling* was held and was covered by the Connexion Magazine, The Vine and Singing the Faith+. Traffic to the vocations pages on the Methodist Church website increased by twenty times following the campaign and Vocations Sunday material was downloaded 1102 times as compared to 143 downloads in the previous year.

17. Methodist Council part 2

Discernment Process for Senior Posts (Resolution 25/5 (2020))

43. The 2020 Conference directed the Ministries Committee (Resolution 25/5) to bring interim proposals for a discernment process for senior posts to the 2021 Conference, and to bring a full report with proposed changes to the Standing Orders to the 2022 Conference. Many initiatives have been implemented to focus on leadership at various stages of ministry. Studies on missional leadership have been included for first year probationers. Second year probationers will do a course on contemporary culture and contextual leadership. There is an MA Module in Transformative Collaborative and Christian Leadership at the Queen's Foundation and an MA in Christian Leadership at Cliff College. The Superintendents' Induction has been shaped around leadership and there will be a further session at the Superintendents' Conference. The Evangelism and Growth team offer numerous opportunities for ministers to work with their leadership teams. Each team has a coach and connect session, supported by the Ministries Team. The Committee feels it would be pragmatic to give more time for these measures to be embedded and grow before a full report on a discernment process can be presented to the Conference.

MATTERS RELATING TO ORDAINED MINISTRY

Stationing Review

44. The Committee notes that the current system for the stationing of deacons and presbyters is now over twenty years old and was designed at a time when the Church and the world she is called to serve were both different in many ways. The Committee recommends that a thorough review of stationing processes be undertaken, reporting to the Methodist Conference in 2023. The Council agreed the following terms of reference for the work:
1. *The Ministries Committee at its meeting in February 2022 resolved that a thorough review of stationing processes be undertaken due to the number of concerns raised by the Ministries Committee, Stationing Committee, Stationing Matching Group, Chairs' Meeting, Connexional Leaders' Forum and gatherings of superintendent ministers in districts and connexionally.*
 2. *This review will report to the Methodist Conference in 2023 and will involve consultation with the Stationing Committee, Stationing Matching Group, Circuit Stewards, Chairs of District, The Warden of the Diaconal Order, Lay-Stationing Representatives, ministers with recent experience of being stationed; as well as the Methodist Church in Ireland and ecumenical partners able to offer insights from different models of stationing practice.*

Task

3. *To undertake a root and branch review of all processes related to the stationing of ministers in the Methodist Church.*
4. *To report to the 2023 Conference with recommendations for changes to those processes and the necessary changes to Standing Orders.*

To Take into Account

5. *The review group will address a number of concerns that have arisen in recent years that affect the Church's ability to offer ministry effectively and fairly. These include:*
 - 5.1 *Ministers retiring, resigning, curtailing and transferring to other churches.*
 - 5.2 *A rising number of ministers (both lay and ordained) taking recuperative years.*
 - 5.3 *A reduction in the number of those candidating for ministry; the shortage of ministers available for the number of appointments submitted to stationing; changing roles and responsibilities for those in ministry (lay and ordained). Particular notice to be taken of factors affecting diaconal stationing, which seems less impacted by numbers candidating and at times has seen insufficient appointments available for the number of deacons in stationing.*
 - 5.4 *How our stationing processes can best meet the needs of mission and ministry on the ground, without a skewing of allocated resources to only those places that can afford them.*
6. *The 2021 Conference Report 'Changing Patterns of Ministry' is a key resource for the stationing review process, as the Review Group explores:*
 - 6.1 *The decrease in the commitment to itinerancy amongst those in active work, possibly due to an increase in pressure around the support of family members. An apparent unwillingness of many of those being stationed to take up ministry in rural, island, 'outlying' (e.g. North of Scotland, Cornwall) areas.*
 - 6.2 *The decrease of a physical presence in churches due to the ongoing pandemic and the increase of virtual worship.*
7. *The Review Group will also review the stationing process for Ministers of Other Churches and Conferences (MOCCs) for, while there is an increase in ministers*

17. Methodist Council part 2

wishing to be stationed, this is not matched by enthusiasm of a number of circuits to receive such ministry. This process has been further complicated by immigration policies and our responsibility as a sponsoring body.

- 7.1 *This review will also explore the reluctance of some circuits to receive probationary ministers.*
- 7.2 *The review group will explore how the implementation of the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (JDS) Strategy; the adoption by the Conference of the Connexional Safeguarding policies and the God In Love Unites Us report impacts on our stationing process.*

Outcomes and Ways of Working

8. *The stationing review group will propose revisions to the stationing matching process that take into account the changing nature of ministry, the costs both financial and environmental of our current way of working and the need for the JDS strategy to be embedded in all our ways of working.*
- 8.1 *The group will consider the length of a standard appointment and offer recommendations for changes as appropriate.*
9. *The Review Group is encouraged to consult widely, as described in paragraph 2 above; to be willing to think creatively and to co-opt or consult with those persons most able to assist it in its work.*

Types of station / Stationing Processes

45. The 2021 Conference directed (Resolution 26/16) the Stationing Committee in consultation with the Ministries Committee to review Standing Order 780 and report to the 2022 Conference. A piece of work was carried out on stationing processes for Presbyteral and Diaconal Ministers and for Ministers of Other Conferences and Churches, to achieve clarity about which appointments for presbyters and deacons are in the control of the Church and which are not, and also the way appointments are made – whether they are through stationing matching or through a competitive recruitment and interview process. The Ministries Committee received a report at their September meeting with recommended principles and the Committee supported the direction of work. A working group was set up to review Standing Order 780 and to consider stationing appointments generally.

Candidates and Presbyters in Local, Pioneer and Specific Cultural/ Language Appointments

46. The 2021 Conference (Resolution 26/17) directed the Stationing and Ministries Committees to ensure that within the candidating, training and stationing processes: a) there is a clear process for enabling some presbyters to serve in local, pioneer and specific cultural/language appointments; b) that this possibility is clearly communicated to those involved in the candidating, training and stationing matching processes; and c) there is guidance for Circuits and presbyters considering such appointments; and report to the 2022 Conference. All District Candidates Secretaries were advised of this resolution and asked to draw it to the attention of candidates. The Queen's Foundation was made aware of it in regard to students. A new process is being developed for candidates who are offering for specific contexts for next year's candidating (the candidating year begins before the Conference each year). The Stationing and Ministries Committees continue with work on processes, in conjunction with other pieces of work around stationing.

Candidates and Medical Reports

47. For the last 18 months the issue of medical reports for candidates and Ministers of Other Conferences and Churches has been under review in consultation with other committees and bodies. Standing Orders relating to this have been suspended for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 Connexional years in order to allow this review to be completed. At its September meeting the Committee approved an outline process to replace medical reports with occupational health assessments for recommended candidates and applicants, which was then considered by the various bodies including MCPOC. MCPOC requested a reconsideration of where the authority sits to decide on whether or not a candidate or applicant can continue in the processes. The Law and Polity Committee is taking external legal advice.

Flourishing / Well-being in Ordained Ministry

48. The Committee was asked to research the well-being of ordained ministers in 2018. This began with a Listening Day on ministerial workload in December 2018 which was attended by a member from each District. A task group was set up the following year and research was commissioned in November 2019. The research was carried out by the Revd Dr Philip J Richter (surveys and statistical analysis) and the Revd Kenneth G Howcroft (previous Conference reports and other documents). They presented their findings to the task group

17. Methodist Council part 2

in July 2020. The Committee tasked a small working group of its members to review the recommendations and bring back further reflections/actions. There were numerous recommendations on how the well-being of our ministers might be improved and the committee agreed that the two factors that create and maintain well-being for ministers are:

- Good RELATIONSHIPS being established, developed and maintained;
- Keeping a BALANCE between many aspects of life and ministry.

The Ministries Team continue to implement the well-being recommendations made by the committee and updates have been made to the Superintendents and Circuit Stewards handbooks. The Director of the Ministries Team is in initial conversation with Sanctuary Mental Health, a charity dedicated to supporting the well-being of those in ministry. He has engaged in four listening sessions or surgeries, with about 20 at each group. Material will be placed on the website at *Signpost for Ministry*. There are plans for online support sessions and potentially input into the Superintendents' Conference 2023.

49. In June 2021 the Committee received a paper from the Revd Caroline A Weaver, Chair of the Working Party on Well-being in Ordained Ministry. The Committee acknowledged the hurt expressed by many of the contributors to the research and the recommendation emerging from the research that healing is needed in many places. A great deal of pain and anguish was expressed in the research. The research was anonymous so individual pastoral responses cannot be made. A letter has been sent to all ministers and supernumerary ministers suggesting they take any issues that have arisen for them through responding to this survey, either to supervision or to their Chair of District, and thanking them for their openness about sometimes very difficult issues. The Committee has recommended that issues should be referred out of Supervision to the Supervision Reference Group. The Committee also recommended that supervisors be reminded that they are not there to solve everything but can refer issues to professionals including the Ministerial Counselling service.
50. The Committee asked the Ministries Team to remind all ministers that the Stationing Committee works on the assumption that a full time appointment involves 12 sessions a week (a session being morning, afternoon or evening. (See CPD Book VII Part 3 Holidays). This might equate to six days of two sessions a week or fewer days if the three sessions are deemed to be "work" related. The Committee encourages ministers and Circuits to use the flexibility built into the system to enable the flourishing of the Church and those serving the Church.

Handbook for Ministers in Circuit Appointments

51. A first draft of the handbook has been scrutinised by the Ministries Committee. It is currently out for consultation and it is anticipated that it will be published at the start of the new connexional year.

Ministers of Other Conferences and Churches (MOCCS) / Review of CPD section 73

52. The Committee affirmed the ministry and vitality that ministers of other churches and conferences (MOCCs) bring to the Methodist Church in Britain (MCB), but also noted the challenging context of the MCB. Therefore a decision was made to pause the MOCC programme for two years (thus not processing applications in January 2022 and 2023). During this time a working group comprising members of the Ministries Committee, the Global Relationships Committee and Fellowships Groups Sub-committee will review the process of transferring ministers. Any ministers enquiring during this time will be sent a statement explaining this decision. This statement is also posted on the MOCC pages of the MCB website.
53. A review of CPD section 73 has begun and the working group has asked the Law and Polity Committee, the Faith and Order Committee and the Methodist Council for their guidance regarding the continuation of this work in the light of the review of the MOCC programme.

Ministerial Formation - exceptions to the maximum length

54. The Committee clarified that, where the Standing Orders permit extension of ministerial formation beyond seven years, this is to include periods of deferral or suspension. Where there has been no deferral or suspension, it is not permitted for formation to extend beyond seven years.

Stationing Online Profiles

55. Work continues to place ministers' profiles live online so that it is a straightforward process to enter into stationing, however the timeline has been revised in order to ensure that the process fits in with the outcomes of the Connexional Team Systems Review. Online stationing profiles will enable information relating to CDIM and supervision to be retained securely.

17. Methodist Council part 2

Supervision Reference Group and draft Reflective Supervision Policy 2021-2026

56. Work is ongoing. The Ministries Committee asked the Supervision Reference Group and the relevant members of the Ministries Team to provide a mechanism and guidance for “referring out” issues related to ministerial well-being from a Supervisory session.

Changes to Patterns of Oversight/Appeals

57. The Committee recommended that the Council set up a working party to review appeals processes in all areas of the Church, the processes to remain as they are currently until the working party has completed its work. See the January Council paper [MC/21/85]. The Appeals Group continues its work and will meet again in April.

STUDENT MATTERS

Ministerial Training and Mental Health (The 2020 Conference Resolution 12/4)

58. The 2020 Conference (Resolution 12/4) directed the Ministries Committee to explore how mental health awareness is included in presbyteral and diaconal training. There are two strands to thinking about mental health in the context of formation for ordained ministry. One is attending to one’s own mental health and building well-being and resilience; the other is understanding issues of mental health in relation to pastoral ministry. During the year the new Well-being Officer at the Queen’s Foundation has undertaken the training programme to be approved as a trainer for the Mental Health First Aid Course. She has also developed a programme of optional creative activities for those living on campus called ‘Wellness Wednesdays’, modelling the link between creativity, leisure and mental well-being. She offers support to individuals with a variety of physical and mental health issues, and also supports the Queen’s community to deal with its own development as a resilient community in challenging circumstances. A proposal is currently being developed and tested, to see whether it is possible for students and staff to complete a mental health first aid course, once the Well-being Officer has been approved as a trainer.

*****RESOLUTIONS****17/12. The Conference receives the Report.****17/13. The Conference amends SO 536(2)(vi) as follows.**

563(2)(vi) if unable to fulfil an appointment, to arrange **if possible** for a suitable substitute, **whilst** informing the Superintendent and a church steward of the Local Church concerned, **or, where unable through illness or other significant reason to arrange a suitable substitute, to notify this to the Superintendent (or their delegate), who shall then arrange for a suitable substitute and inform a church steward of the Local Church concerned;**

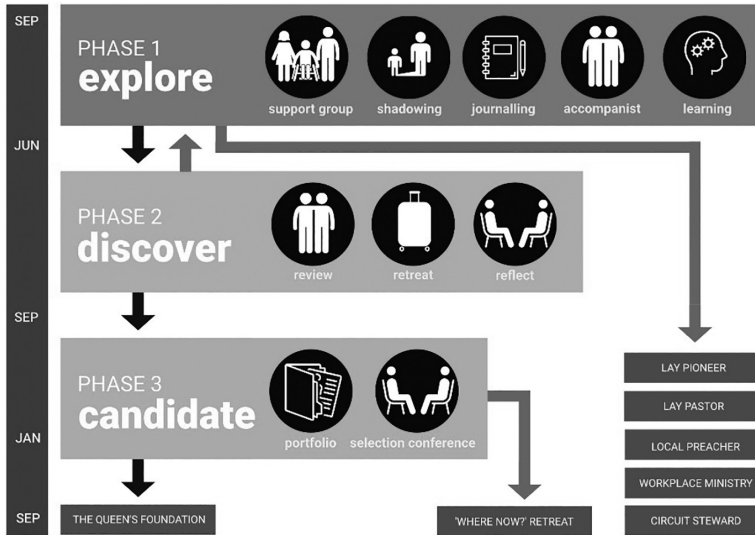
SECTION O
CANDIDATING REVIEW GROUP
1. Executive summary

A new candidating process is to be set in place, beginning in September 2023. The key features of the proposed scheme are as follows:

- The formal candidating process will begin in September and will be complete by the end of February.
- It will be open to any who are baptised and have been in active membership of the Methodist Church for at least one year.
- In order to enable people to explore vocation and church leadership in the widest possible sense of the word and to help some who will subsequently candidate for ordained ministry, a 10-month Connexional Exploration programme will be offered.
- Those wishing to test a vocation to ordained ministry will be required to attend a retreat and meet with an Ordained Vocational Advisory Group in the summer preceding formal candidating. This panel will explore the wide range of possibilities and demands in ordained ministry to help potential candidates discern whether they are ready to proceed to test a call.
- Candidates who register to candidate in September, will submit a portfolio and spend 48 hours at a selection conference, where panels will have more time than in the current scheme with each candidate.
- The process is intentionally open, welcoming and accommodating of candidates from diverse backgrounds.

17. Methodist Council part 2

The details and reasoning of the proposed scheme are set out below.



The work of the Candidating Review Group

1.1. The brief of the CRG given by the Ministries Committee was to develop a candidating process which:

- is appropriate for the size and nature of the current church but also sufficiently nimble and flexible to adapt to the emerging needs and shape of the future church;
- ensures that we are being good stewards of our finance and people and minimises any negative impact which our processes might have on the climate;
- provides appropriate guidance, support and enabling to all those involved in the nurture and discernment processes at circuit, district and connexional level in order to achieve a uniform approach across the church;
- is both robust in what it expects of candidates but pastoral as it responds to potential identified and shares outcomes of the process;
- does not put unnecessary barriers in the way of those who have a genuine sense of call.

Within the scope, we were urged to undertake a 'root and branch review of all current processes from Call to Acceptance for training as a student minister'.

- 1.2. The CRG met for the first time in October 2020. It has met nine times including one three-day residential in July 2021 and a two-day residential in November 2021. In addition, sub-groups have consulted with various bodies on zoom, all of which were video recorded and/or with full notes so that all members could have access to the information.
- 1.3. The CRG has consulted widely within the Connexion and with other churches. Members also read and discussed a number of relevant ministry and research papers including the research carried out by Lyn McClery and Philip Richter, the Changing Patterns of Ministry Report (Conference 2020 agenda 34), and received papers from the Nigerian Methodist Church, members of CSC, District Candidates' Secretaries, Methodist pioneers and the work on Vocations in the Ministries Team.

2. Vocation: Calling and journeying

- 2.1. As Ephesians 4 reminds us, the call to particular ministries is set within the general calling of all God's people, with the purpose of equipping

'the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ...'

- 2.2. In other words, all are called and find their vocation in Christ. Within the divine economy of the church, members of the body of Christ are actively engaging with each other to discern the way in which each part may work properly, so that the body may continually build itself up in love and all grow up into Christ. The particular ministries listed to enable this (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors & teachers) are not to be taken either as a permanent set of fixed ministries nor to be seen as exhaustive of other possibilities. Whilst the characteristics of the church - as prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral, teaching the faith and staying in continuity with the early church and the sending of Christ, - remain constant, the ministries through which these are expressed may change over time and differing contexts. 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 demonstrate such variety even within the New Testament writings.
- 2.3. The majority of the Christian Church has found particular ordained ministries to be a way of representing the calling of the church to itself and all its members,

17. Methodist Council part 2

and yet history, as well as contemporary experience, demonstrates that the Spirit is ever prompting new tasks, patterns of service and ministries to arise in the body of Christ. This report is primarily about a process of candidating for ordained ministry but this can never to be divorced from the calling of all God's people, nor seen as a separate activity from the primary calling to follow Christ, in which each finds a role and vocation. This has been recognised in many reports to Conference, most recently in the *Changing Patterns of Ministry* report (2020).

'All of God's people have gifts to be used for the sake of the whole Church for the sake of the world. As the Methodist Church continues to discern how it is to live out its calling in a changed and changing world, all members are called to re-discover, with the help of the community, their gifts and the tasks which they are to undertake.' [2.5.3]

- 2.4. The raising up of appropriate leadership ministries within the church grows out of the whole body of Christ as it actively engages with discernment of call and gifts. This wider context has been part of the thinking of the CRG as it considered the process for candidating for ordained ministry.
- 2.5. The route to any kind of Christian ministry or service is likely to take the form of a journey in response to and more deeply into the divine calling, involving experience and conversation, which enable self-discovery and insight into God's call. The scriptures bear witness to many such journeys of vocational discovery. For example, Jacob takes a life long journey involving various encounters before discovering his new identity as Israel; the disciples on the Emmaus road find new joy and purpose in the conversation with an apparent stranger. From the moment of her angelic epiphany, Mary begins a series of journeys through which the divine plan unfolds and becomes clearer, even if the final journey to see her son die on the cross is not a welcome one. This Biblical pattern of personal and corporate journeys informs vocational exploration and is at the heart of these proposals.

3. Current Context

- 3.1. The system for candidates to explore their sense of call to ordained ministry and for the church to test that call has been in place since union in 1932. At that time, there was only one order of ordained ministry within the British Methodist Church and only men could be candidates. Membership stood at roughly three quarters of a million. Much has changed in the ninety years since union.

- 3.2. The Methodist Church recognised that God calls women to ordained presbyteral ministry and the first ordinations took place in 1974. Following the re-opening to candidates of the diaconate, the first ordinations took place in 1990 and in 1993 Conference agreed that the diaconate was an ordained order of ministry and a religious order. The 2019 report of the Theology and Ecclesiology underpinning the Diaconate and the Methodist Diaconal Order (MDO) affirmed that candidates demonstrate a calling and commitment both to the religious order and order of ministry. In recent times, the system for those exploring their call to diaconal ministry has been broadly based on that for presbyteral ministry.
- 3.3. The introduction of Foundation Training in 1999 was intended to help those feeling some sense of call beyond their local church or circuit to explore a range of possibilities by study, conversation and placements. The scheme brought a number of benefits, not least in allowing explorers the opportunity to know better the being and work of presbyters and deacons and, as a result, those who candidated were usually clearer about their particular sense of call. Through Foundation Training, some discovered their call to ministries other than ordained or were affirmed in their current form of service and work, but the majority of those who undertook Foundation Training candidated for ordained ministry. The scheme proved to be more expensive than anticipated and because it was based in Ministerial Training Institutions, it was perceived to be too closely associated with an ordained ministry trajectory to help a wide range of vocations.
- 3.4. In 2006, Conference agreed to replace Foundation Training with Exploring Discipleship Extending Vocation (EDEV). This was a district or regionally based, voluntary led, programme exploring calling. A variety of approaches was adopted across the Connexion and the programme varied in structure, content and effectiveness. Over recent years, with the involvement of the Learning Network, there has been more consistency and the development of some useful resources that we can continue to draw upon. Most recently, a Connexional online programme has been piloted. Other ways of sensing and exploring vocation exist in the church. For many years, Cliff College has played a significant part in helping Christians find their vocation, and, in more recent times, Fellowship Groups, the Pioneer Network and the One Programme have enabled people to explore leadership in a variety of ways.
- 3.5. The current situation for the Methodist Church is very different from that prevailing in 1932. The membership is now a quarter of its size at Union. As well as the reduction in numbers, the gradual but inexorable ending of

17. Methodist Council part 2

Christendom in the West has located the church in a very different relationship with wider society and contemporary culture. Britain has become increasingly multi-cultural and multi-faith, as well as secular, and Methodism in recent years has seen the growth of a variety of new communities such as the Fellowship Groups and culturally diverse congregations. These communities are growing in number with diverse lay ministries such as evangelists and lay pastors; youth and music ministers that could lead to ordained vocations. In addition, the church has developed a digital presence, significantly strengthened by the recent exploration of worship via Zoom, Facebook Live, YouTube and other social network platforms. Fresh expressions, pioneering communities, new places for new people, church at the margins, and new monasticism have also begun to feature in our ecclesial landscape and with them the emergence of new types of leadership. In terms of ministries, we have seen the growth of lay employees, the emergence of pioneers and local lay pastors, as well as a host of online offerings.

4. The current system

- 4.1. Over the course of our consultations and conversations, we have identified issues that should be addressed and/or principles that we wish to adopt in developing a new candidating process.
- 4.2. Changing the starting conditions. Currently, to candidate for presbyteral ministry a person must be baptised, a member in good standing for three years and a local preacher. To candidate for diaconal ministry a person must be baptised, a member in good standing for three years and a Worship Leader. Evidence suggests that changing these conditions may enable more to explore their sense of call to ordained ministry. For a few, especially those new to Methodism, the length of the journey to ordination (up to 10 years) inhibits their offer and they are lost to Methodism. Therefore, we suggest that to candidate a person must be baptised and an active member of the British Methodist Church for at least one year. Whilst we believe that many will find their call to ordained ministry through the route of becoming a Local preacher or worship leader, the changing pattern of church life and the nature of proclamation in pioneer communities and church at the margins means we should make it possible for others to enter the process also. Moreover, the preaching of a presbyter is not the same as that of a local preacher. The presbyter has pastoral charge and presides at communion, and so preaches from a different place. Likewise, the proclamation ministry of deacons is markedly different from that of a local church worship leader. Learning preaching and worship leading within the context of training for ordained ministry can be both appropriate and practical, as seen in some other denominations. Those without formal worship

and preaching training would require particular pathways in their training at the Queen's Foundation. We suggest that probation be also revisited to enable more effective growth in leading worship, proclamation and preaching for all probationers.

- 4.3. More time with candidates in discernment. In the PhD research of Lyn McClery into the candidating processes of the Church of England, Church of Scotland, Methodist and Baptist churches, it became clear that our processes deliver less time face-to-face with candidates than others and often in short bursts rather than in longer sustained discernment conversations. In the Salvation Army, which operates a staged process similar to our own, more time is spent in face-to-face discernment with candidates. As the core of this work is discernment of the nature of a call alongside those who sense a call, so we believe that more face-to-face conversation should be built into the process.
- 4.4. Clarity about which ordained ministry. Feedback from every level of our current process, including when people arrive at the Queen's Foundation, suggests that some people are not clear about the difference between presbyteral and diaconal ministries and uncertain as to where their calling is heading. This may be compounded by the emergence of lay pastors and pioneers in the life of our church, where the sense of call is often strong but sometimes not yet fully clear. In response to this, we have created an exploration process, which will help those who are not yet clear. That, together with the Ordained Vocational Advisory Group, should enable better signposting to shadowing and placement opportunities
- 4.5. Diversity and fairness to all candidates and communities. The multi-cultural nature of our church has grown over recent years and has added to the rich diversity of our ministry, but it has also highlighted the need for any candidating process to be culturally sensitive and affirming. A richly diverse ministry also requires sensitivity and awareness in relation to issues of race, gender, disability and sexuality, as well as learning styles and medical issues. Any new process must be capable of such sensitivity. The proposed journey with an accompanist, selected from a diverse pool of skilled and experienced people, will provide the opportunity for greater sensitivity to all candidates. We also believe that more time with each candidate at the selection conference will allow for deeper engagement with a person's journey and heritage and thus enable better discernment. At the same time, we recognise that leaders are emerging in linguistically diverse congregations and often see their call to ordination as a call to serve their language communities. The process needs to enable people discerning such a call to be accompanied and guided so that they really consider how their call to ordination can most effectively be lived out in the British Methodist Church.

17. Methodist Council part 2

- 4.6. Affirmation of all who offer for church leadership and are seeking God's direction. We were particularly impressed with the process used by the United Methodist Church. After an initial affirmation of some sense of call to church leadership, candidates become 'licenced' and have an open, variable length of time to explore and find their vocation with learning opportunities provided by the church. There are various departure points, for example, when the call to be a local pastor is discerned, and there are several patterns of ordained ministry to which people may move (eg itinerant or non-itinerant). Throughout the process their 'licenced status' is an affirmation of their call, and they have sufficient time for discernment. We recognise that currently candidates who are not recommended in the British Methodist Church are provided with care, local and connexional, in a variety of ways, but we believe it is possible to build more flexibility and affirmation in and throughout the process.
- 4.7. Readiness for learning and training. Feedback from the Queen's Foundation tells us that whilst some truly value the opportunity for learning and growth and make the most of it, others come with a sense of 'having completed the process' and are less ready and able to benefit from training. College staff have spoken positively of some aspects of Foundation Training, particularly where those exploring call were often hungry for learning and engaged with energy. We do not propose a return to Foundation Training, but it is our conviction that the exploration phase of this proposed scheme will prepare people better for their time in ministerial training, creating a delight in learning and providing time for study skills support at an early stage for those whom this would benefit.
- 4.8. One (connexional) place for discernment. It is clear that we have in District Candidates Committees (DCC) and in the Connexional Candidates Selection Committee (CSC) a host of capable and dedicated individuals who prayerfully seek to discern those whom God is calling to ordained ministry. It is also clear that this two staged (three, if you count Circuit Meeting) process contains some checks and balances that can aid discernment. However, there is a view that this staging extends the time and pressure of the process and is not now appropriate within the size of our church (and with the numbers of candidates offering). It can sometimes feel like one part of the process is in conflict with another when there are different outcomes at DCC and CSC. Of course, those who are engaged in the process at DCC or CSC have positive things to say about their place of engagement, but we sense a broad, sometimes reluctant, conviction at all levels that we should shorten this process and 'remove one layer'. We do not regard this as removing a layer, but as establishing a single connexional point of engagement, using the people resources differently.

THE THREE PHASES OF VOCATION EXPLORATION

5. Phase 1: The Vocation Exploration Opportunity

- 5.1. This is a voluntary opportunity for lay people to explore a sense of vocation and church leadership, lay or ordained, in church or in the wider community. The Vocation Exploration Opportunity has five elements:
- A group programme, where people commit for 10-month period;
 - Shadowing experiences;
 - Journaling;
 - Regular meetings with the accompanist;
 - Opportunities to dip into a range of resources available for learning and exploration.
- 5.2. Explorers on the course are normally expected to be members of the Methodist Church in Britain when they join the Exploration Opportunity. People can self-refer, be recommended by their minister or superintendent or may be advised to engage with this by the Ordained Vocations Advisory Group. People may register (online) at any time of the year. The registration will involve uploading a letter from a local church leader confirming that the person is a member of the Methodist Church. A local church leader could be an ordained Minister, Language Fellowship Leader, New Places for New People leader or Church at the Margins leader. A copy of a current DBS (children and vulnerable adults) will be required and some indication of what types of shadowing experiences the person would prefer. Those registering after the start of the 10-month programme will not be able to join the group programme until the next September but will be encouraged to start journaling and be matched with an accompanist at whatever point they register. It may also be possible for them to engage with some shadowing, and attend other courses.
- 5.3. The 10-month group programme is designed to ignite, or fan, a passion for learning and growing as a disciple who explores faith and calling. It will consist of six sessions online, 3 hours each, running from September to June, together with three 'regional' or 'cultural' hub meetings. Journaling and shared conversation will be central to the programme. In a covenanted relationship, Explorers commit to the dates and to be attentive to one another's journey as well as their own journey. The content will include:
- Biblical perspectives on vocation
 - Methodist perspectives on vocation
 - Exploring my faith journey in my context
 - Prayer and discernment

17. Methodist Council part 2

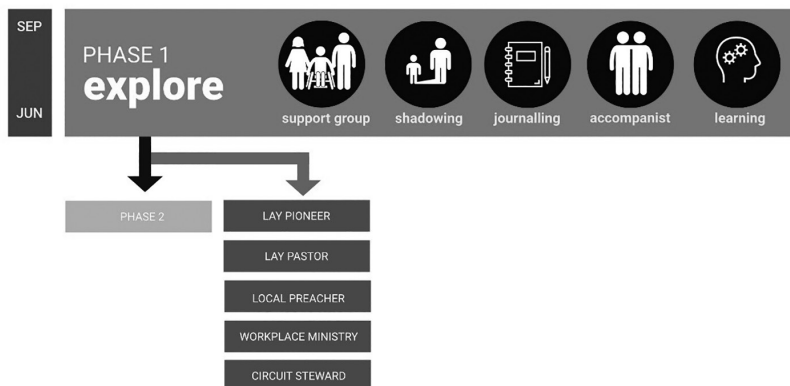
- Engagement with a range of forms of ministry
- Theological Reflection
- Social justice
- *Our Calling* and a Methodist Way of Life

5.4. 'Regional' or 'cultural' Hub groupings will be allocated each year depending on where various factors. A hub could be created according geography, cultural background, NPNP involvement or other common elements. The purpose will be to: build relationships; check in with journaling; reflect on shadowing; explore course content informally over food; share stories as Explorers and engage with the perspectives of others. The outline pattern of meetings will be:

Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
online	'regional' / 'cultural' Hub Beginnings	online	online	online	'regional' / 'cultural' Hub Check in	online	No gathered over Easter	online	'regional' / Celebration & endings

- 5.5. Shadowing experiences will be organized to allow Explorers to be alongside and have conversation with people in different ministries (eg Fellowships or culturally diverse congregations, pioneer, local preacher, deacon, presbyter) based on those identified by the Explorer at the beginning and at any time during the programme. Matches will be made connexionally, or by Learning Network staff regionally. All Explorers will be offered a comprehensive list of possibilities, including global church links and all will be offered an experience with a Presbyter and a Deacon; if the Explorer is not interested at all in either of these ministries for themselves, the experience might simply be a short meeting to hear about the ministry. An Explorer may have a strong sense of call to one of these ministries in which case the shadowing could be more substantial with that form of ministry. For diaconal shadowing experiences, consultation with the Warden and Deputy Warden of the MDO will enable people to be matched with deacons who can provide an insightful experience without overburdening anyone.
- 5.6. Accompanists will be appointed to accompany the Explorer for the length of the programme and this might extend after the 10-month course has ended. Their key role will be to engage in the reflective conversations with the Explorer. Accompanists will be allocated from a wide range of experienced and trained people, (eg current CSC or DCC members, Supernumeraries, Learning Network staff, District Officers, Language Fellowship Leaders, New Places New People (NPNP) leaders, Church at the Margins (CaM) leaders, and other Lay people). If an accompanist changes during the journey, the handover of records will take place in the same way as in supervision.

- 5.7. The end of the course will have a variety of outcomes such as the further investigation or taking up a particular role as a local preacher, worship leader, circuit steward, local lay pastor, or an affirmation of their Christian calling within their employment or voluntary community involvement. Some will discern a call to ordained ministries and move to the next phase: with the Ordained Vocational Advisory Group.



6. Phase 2: Ordained Vocational Advisory

- 6.1. This phase takes place in the period June to September. For those completing the Exploration phase and wishing to test a call to ordination, it could follow on immediately. It is however possible to enter at this phase, even if the person has not undertaken the Exploration phase, at any point. This allows some people with considerable appropriate experience to go straight to the Ordained Vocational Advisory phase. If someone has not been part of an Exploration course, an accompanist will be appointed at this point.
- 6.2. The Ordained Vocational Advisory phase comprises three elements:
- Review - A guided conversation with the accompanist, about the Discoverer's understanding of the implications of candidating for ordained ministry – including:
 - the 'cost' of candidating (financial, implications for family, community, friends, existing church roles);
 - readiness and openness to learning;
 - *Our Calling* and a Methodist Way of Life;

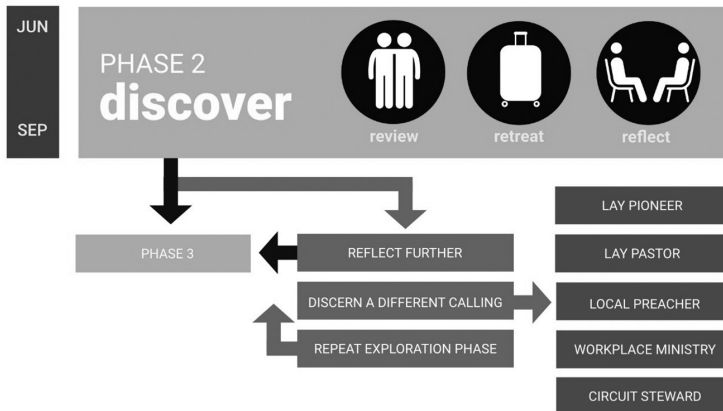
17. Methodist Council part 2

- reflecting on the criteria;
- an understanding covenant relationship with church – eg discipline, public representative ministry etc;
- ability to articulate basic understanding of presbyteral and diaconal ministry (including what is involved in being part of a Religious Order);
- an understanding of presbyters serving specific contexts (local, pioneers and language specific congregations);
- being set free to life-long ministry/service;
- well-being and resilience implications.

The individual and their accompanist would produce an agreed record of the guided conversation, including the main elements of the conversation, any gaps identified, questions to consider or concerns to address. A summary of this would be shared with the person's Superintendent Minister.

- Retreat – A three-day event, Friday night to Sunday afternoon, in mid-July for all who are engaging in this phase of discernment. We envisage two such retreats, each year, one in the North and one in the South. The retreat leaders would comprise an ordained presbyter, an ordained deacon and a lay person, all skilled retreat leaders, who will guide the retreat, and be available for one to one conversation. The purpose of the retreat is for individuals to consider their calling in a prayerful environment with deep spiritual reflection on ministry. We suggest that individuals are invited to make a small financial donation towards costs, with discretionary support available to those requiring it. The accompanist will not be present at the retreat, but will need to be aware of what is covered in the retreat for the follow on discussion. The retreat ends with Discoverer's self-reflection and reflection from the retreat leaders.
- Reflect - A conversation with the accompanist, in the light of the review and retreat follows, to help the person decide on the next steps. The person may decide to candidate, that ordained ministry is not the vocation for them, to explore another form of ministry or to reflect further before deciding. If they decide to candidate, they then meet with the Ordained Vocational Advisory Group (OVAG). The person meets, either in person or on zoom (their choice) with three members involved in candidating (e.g., CSC co-chairs). Their accompanist attends the meeting with the Discoverer. The content is a guided conversation that covers their sense of call as it has emerged so far; how what they are discerning fits with the Methodist Church (with regards to current, emerging and future forms of ordained ministry); their ability to articulate an understanding of the discipline of stationing and itinerancy (as appropriate); what it means to serve the church in public and representative ministry; for presbyters, a discussion

about the way ordained ministry might be exercised in specific contexts; and for deacons, what it means to be part of a dispersed religious order. There would also be discussion around what else the individual might need to do in preparation for Candidating; for example, a placement with 'the eye of a minister', additional reading or study (regarding skills for theological reflection, for example). Following this meeting, the OVAG would write to each person, indicating the main elements of the conversation, any gaps identified, questions to consider or concerns to address. The letter would be passed on to the Candidates Selection Conference, and copied to the Warden of the MDO to enable further guidance on next step, if the person chooses to test their call to ordination. The OVAG would not make a judgment about the person or whether they should proceed, though it may suggest areas for further work or thought. It remains advisory. The discernment decisions are still all made by the candidate at this stage. The individual and their accompanist would engage in dialogue with the regional LN officers, the Superintendent and the MDO (as appropriate) to enable those recommendations and suggestions to be acted upon.



7. Phase 3: Candidating for Ordained Ministry

- 7.1. Testing a call to ordination will be a shorter process than currently, beginning in September and concluding by the end of January or early February. After registration, a portfolio will be submitted by each candidate and candidates would attend the same 48-hour residential, which will involve a series of one to one and triangle conversations, a panel presentation and some observed

17. Methodist Council part 2

group activities, including group preparation of worship. Those recommended for training, subject to the Conference, would have a conversation with the Queen's Foundation staff about how to make best use of their time before the ministerial training programme starts. This would provide around six months for appropriate preparation and/or placement.

7.2. Timeline

1st October - deadline for submission of Application form

October/November - conversations with Warden of the MDO for diaconal candidates

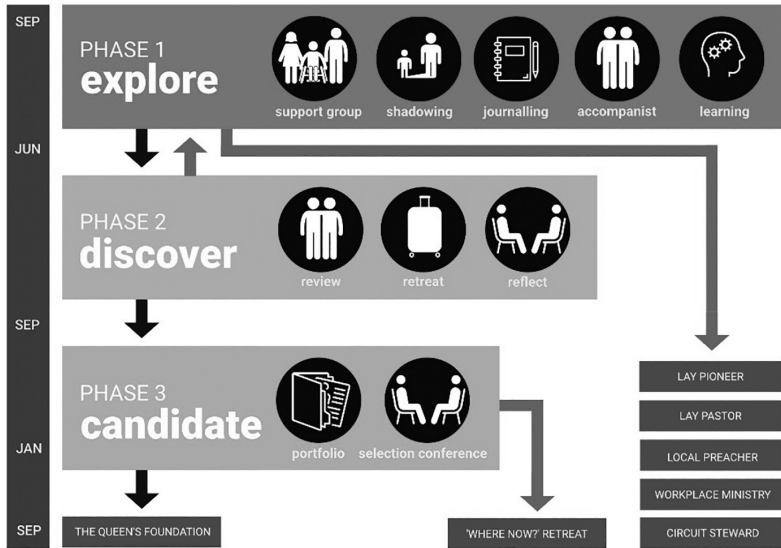
1st December - deadline for submission of Portfolio

Late January or early February - Connexional Selection Conference

March to September - guided preparation for entry into ministerial training for recommended candidates with support for non-recommended candidates, as at present.

- 7.3. The Portfolio will be passed on to readers, who will not formally mark but will feed back comments and questions on the submission to help the Connexional selection panel in its work. The guidelines for the Portfolio will outline the elements that could be included in the portfolio but it will be up to candidates to decide what they wish to include. Elements that must accompany the portfolio are: the letter from the OVAG, a reference from the CLT, a critical friend and the accompanist and a report from a supervisor of any formal placement undertaken.
- 7.4. The Connexional Selection Conference will be a 48 hour period for each candidate who will meet a panel. We envisage that there will be up to eight panels of six people. Each panel will meet with up to four people each. This allows for a maximum capacity of 32 candidates. (If the numbers are higher than this, the timetable can be reconfigured and/or a second conference could be introduced). During this period, there will be at least two lengthy one-to-one conversations with a member of the panel, observed 'group' exercises, presentations and two panel interviews.
- 7.5. The emphasis at the Selection Conference is on understanding the person, their journey and sense of call. Significantly more time will be spent with each candidate over the 48 hours than at present. The panel will attend to the

agreed criteria for ordained ministry and attend to spiritual discernment as key to decision making. In order to do this, panel members will be given regular training and support in spiritual discernment.



8. Strengths of the proposed candidating process

- 8.1. It would shorten the process from the sensing of a call to the point of ordination.
- 8.2. It removes the element of perceived conflict between decisions at DCC and those at CSC
- 8.3. It removes some of the (perceived) barriers to be eligible to candidate.
- 8.4. It prepares people more thoroughly for the testing of the call.
- 8.5. It would be inclusive of a wide range of people, reflecting the growing number of ways leadership in the church is developing.
- 8.6. It gives panel members longer time with candidates.

17. Methodist Council part 2

- 8.7. It would be more sensitive to cultural, heritage and other forms of diversity.
- 8.8. It provides accompaniment throughout the process.
- 8.9. It continues to value and benefit from those currently involved in District panels and CSC.
- 8.10. It would give the Queen's Foundation more preparation time for recommended candidates.
- 8.11. It would ease timetable pressures on panels at CSC in for example, allowing a longer period for completion of paperwork and appeals.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

17/14. The Conference receives the Report.

17/15. The Conference adopts the process for candidating for presbyteral and diaconal ministry as set out in the Report.

17/16. The Conference directs the Law and Polity Committee to present to the 2023 Conference draft revisions of Section 71 of the Standing Orders (and of any related Standing Orders) to accommodate the new candidating processes.

SECTION P

LOCAL LAY-PASTORS

1. Following the decision of the 2021 Conference to establish the office of Local Lay-Pastor, work has been undertaken to develop a framework and a set of competencies for the role.

The Competencies

2. The first major piece of work was developing a set of competencies for the role. A working group was established to bring together understandings of the role, to begin to build a network of people who are at the forefront of developing this role and to ensure the competencies meet the needs of the different models and contexts. Meetings were held and several drafts produced, with time in between for representatives to consult with their local contexts and Districts.
3. The working group decided that the competencies could be grouped into different stages of a Local-Lay Pastors development. Early competencies

need to be met during recruitment processes to ensure fitness to begin the role. Local Lay-Pastors then undertake a period of learning and development, accessing teaching and reflecting on the role to meet a set of core competencies. Further development competencies were seen as areas where Local Lay-Pastors might develop specialisms or deeper knowledge – recognising that such roles are lifelong learning roles.

4. One of the challenges is, where Local Lay-Pastors are employed, they are expected to begin the role immediately and ‘train on the job’. In a role where pastoral care and leadership is being offered, there is a need to have a certain level of competency to match responsibility.
5. Where a Local Lay-Pastor is appointed as a volunteer, there is a level of flexibility to allow for a longer time of development, balancing initial responsibilities with the current level of competency. However, this approach could also be offered to those who are employed, ensuring responsibilities match competency and training, which would then be increased as the Local Lay-Pastor develops.
6. It would be necessary for Circuits to work out the level of initial competency required and how that would match with preliminary responsibilities. Therefore, the early competencies are a focus for initial development during the probation period and a Circuit would need to decide which of the competencies it uses to shape the person specification for recruitment.

Training

7. There have been very fruitful conversations with Cliff College in offering a training route for Local Lay-Pastors. Cliff College is currently developing a Formation in Mission and Ministry modular course. A number of accredited modules can either be taken as standalone modules or used towards a qualification.
8. In collaboration, we have worked out a number of modules that upon successful completion demonstrate ‘meeting’ the core competencies and would lead to accreditation as a Local Lay-Pastor. The six modules, completed one each term over a two-year period, are Christian Spirituality; Leadership, Team and Self; Ministry in the Methodist Tradition; Theological Reflection and Reflective Practice; Pastoral Practice; and Christian Theology. There are several other modules which could be taken alongside or as part of ongoing development as a Local Lay-Pastor, leading to deeper knowledge and specialisms.

17. Methodist Council part 2

Context

9. Another challenge in developing this role is the need for it to reflect other forms of ministry where people do not remain in roles for long periods. This is especially apparent when balancing the framework for the office with employment legislation. If employed roles are offered fixed-term there need to be justifiable reasons why this is the case, and morally, we must ensure appropriate levels of job security are given to those in employment.
10. There has been some wisdom gleaned from conversations in what makes the role effective. The most effective practice is where the appointment of Local Lay-Pastors is related to the ministry of the whole Circuit and not seen as a replacement for previously held ministry roles. This provides an opportune moment for a review of the ministry model used in a Circuit, ensuring ministry matches the needs of the Circuit and its mission in the world, while appropriately enabling the gifts of those responding to God's call in the Circuit.
11. Local Lay-Pastors should not be seen as a replacement for a presbyter or deacon, but a form of complementary ministry in enabling mission for the sake of the world. This way of reflecting and reviewing offers a process for recruiting someone to a Local Lay-Pastor role for a particular period.
12. Therefore, before someone is appointed, it would be necessary for a Circuit to review their current mission and ministry and develop a model for going forward, which may include the appointment of Local Lay-Pastors. This model would be implemented for a particular period, and could be related to stationing movements.
13. Another review would be necessary at the end of this time, recognising that the context we work in is changing rapidly and our ministry models must adapt to the needs of the world and where God is calling us. The review at the end might lead to a different model, or an extension of the current one and contracts extended.

Recruitment

14. In supporting Circuits making the appointment of Local Lay-Pastors, a process with guidance is being developed. The review mentioned above would be the first step and where there is need for Local Lay-Pastors the following would happen.

15. In recruiting Local Lay-Pastors, a Circuit would need to decide the particular duties of their Local Lay-Pastors based on their decided ministry model. This would form the job description, which would be created from a template. In relation to this they would need to decide the initial responsibilities and level of competency required to begin the role, using the early competencies as a basis. This will form the person specification, created using a template. Using these documents, a Circuit will then design their interview and selection process based on guidance provided.
16. Next, a contract would be agreed, following a model contract, and the learning and development process begun. Training would commence through Cliff College. The Circuit would then submit a form to the Ministries Team to indicate that someone had started the Local Lay-Pastor accreditation process; this would include identification of which competencies have been evidenced during the selection process.
17. The Circuit would then need to design an appropriate induction, appointing a suitable line-manager and ensuring the individual is aware of local policies and key Methodist policies as well as attending Safeguarding and other required training. It will also be necessary to use the competencies as a framework to identify where the Local Lay-Pastor may need particular support.
18. A Local Lay-Pastor will commence a six-month probation period. During this period they should have evidenced meeting all of the early competencies and made good progress towards the core competencies. This will be assessed through successful completion of two Cliff College modules and through regular reflective line-management meetings. A form will shape reflective line-management conversations to ensure that these focus on competencies, recognising those that are being met, and those which may need extra support.
19. After at least six months, upon completion of two modules, demonstration of meeting all the early competencies and a good level of progress towards meeting the core competencies, a Circuit would decide that a Local Lay-Pastor has successfully completed their probation period. The Circuit submits a second form to the Ministries Team, indicating completion of the probation period and which competencies have been demonstrated as met.
20. Following this, the Local Lay-Pastor continues learning and developing by completing the remaining required Cliff College modules and focusing on meeting all of the core competencies through reflective line-management.

17. Methodist Council part 2

21. Upon successful completion of the six Cliff College modules, the Circuit will complete a form indicating that the Local Lay-Pastor has demonstrated the core competencies as met. They will use reflective line-management conversations, evidenced through meeting records, to support their decision. This form will be sent to the Ministries Team who will then provide a certificate of accreditation as a Local Lay-Pastor for a set period.

Continuing Development

22. It is important that the induction is not seen as the end of learning and development in this role. All ministry is an ongoing process of lifelong learning. Therefore, Local Lay-Pastors will be required to engage in continuing professional development. This might be through taking additional modules, but can also include other appropriate learning activities.
23. At the end of their initial accreditation period, a Local Lay-Pastor will need to demonstrate that they have continued to meet the competencies and engaged in further development activities. A Circuit will submit a form supporting this re-accreditation to the Ministries Team and a further time-limited certificate of accreditation will be given.
24. Key to the success of the development of a Local Lay-Pastor is the recognition that there is need for a Local Lay-Pastor to engage in learning and development. A Circuit must make consideration of the time and financial support required for this from the beginning. These should be seen as integral to the role and so when a Circuit is recruiting a Local Lay-Pastor, the hours expected for the role should include learning and development time, particularly time needed to complete the modules at Cliff College. Costs should also be considered and included as on-costs in working out the necessary budget for the role.

Standing Orders

25. The Standing Orders presented here form a new Section of *The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church* (CPD). It is numbered 56A because the *Changing Patterns of Ministry* report made plain that Local Lay-Pastor was to be an office of the Church and not just another title for a lay worker. It therefore follows Section 56 which is about the office of Local Preacher. Because Local Lay-Pastor is an office which some may be employed to undertake rather than the title of an employed role which some may undertake in a voluntary way, the new Section comes before Section 57 which is about Lay Employment.

- 26. The new Section defines the office of Local Lay-Pastor and makes provision for the appointment of people to it, their training, support and accountability, and the termination of the appointment.
- 27. The creation of these Standing Orders will require consequential amendments elsewhere in CPD. These will be placed on the Order Paper of the Conference. They will cover such topics as where the membership of Local Lay-Pastors should be held in general, and whether specific provision needs to be made about where any complaints about their conduct in office are addressed; of which meetings in the local churches and circuits they should be members ex-officio; whether the District Policy Committee should be involved initially in some way in all appointments; and their role in the offering of extended communion.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

17/17. The Conference receives the Report.

17/18. The Conference adopts the competencies for Local Lay-Pastors as set out below:

	Early Competencies	Core Competencies	Further Development Competencies
1. Vocation (Call and Commitment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to articulate a sense of God’s call to pastoral ministry in the local context. 2. The ability to articulate experiences where they have demonstrated pastoral ministry. 3. The recognition from others that they have the gifts for pastoral ministry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirmation by others in the ministry context that they have the gifts for this ministry. 2. Demonstrates a clear commitment to the outworking of their calling in the role of a Local Lay-Pastor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working with others to further develop a sense of vocational calling

17. Methodist Council part 2

	Early Competencies	Core Competencies	Further Development Competencies
2. Vocation (ministry in the Methodist Church in Britain)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be a member of good standing in the Methodist Church. 2. A worshipping presence in the Christian community. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An understanding of ministry lay and ordained within the Methodist Church in Britain and their place within this ministry. 2. The ability to articulate a basic working understanding of local circuit and district structures and what it means to be part of a connexional church. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A thorough understanding of the structures of the Methodist Church in Britain and how connexional networks support and enable local ministry.
3. Relationship with God	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A trusting relationship with God that is marked by humility, reverence, awe and wonder. 2. A prayerful disciple 3. A good knowledge of the Bible and the ability to relate this to daily living. 4. Committed to walking daily with God, accepting that at times this may be challenging and that on occasions there may be doubt 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A secure foundation in faith, but an openness to transformation as they develop new understandings of ministry and their calling. 2. A good understanding of the basics of the Christian faith from a Methodist perspective. 3. A prayerful leader. 4. An openness to listening to God's Spirit along with the whole community. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A good understanding of the Christian faith from a range of traditions and Methodism's place within the wider Church. 2. Able to articulate personal growth in faith through theological reflection in their ministry context.

	Early Competencies	Core Competencies	Further Development Competencies
4. Personality and Character	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Honesty and integrity in living as a disciple of Christ with appropriate self-confidence and humility. 2. A reflective practitioner who is aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and their potential for self-development. 3. Compliance with the Methodist Church's Safeguarding requirements, including DBS checks demonstrating that there is nothing that prevents them from being a Local Lay-Pastor. 4. The ability to identify and maintain appropriate boundaries in professional and personal relationships. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good self-awareness and the ability to use strategies for resilience and wellbeing and to exercise appropriate care of self, through developing sustainable patterns of life and work, and through effective support networks, modelling this for others. 2. The ability to operate under supervision and accept guidance from others, including being managed and led. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to use vulnerability appropriately to enable others to see God's presence in all aspects of human life.

17. Methodist Council part 2

	Early Competencies	Core Competencies	Further Development Competencies
5. Being in Relationship with Others	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A love for and a call to serve and care for the wider local community and those who are part of the church community. 2. Recognition of and the ability to articulate the fundamental equality of all people before God and the ability to see God in others. 3. The capacity to develop and maintain open and healthy personal, professional and pastoral relationships. 4. The ability to work with diversity inside and outside the church, having respect for the different gifts of all people irrespective of gender, sexuality, age, social and ethnic background and theological understanding, whether they are lay or ordained, people of faith or people of no faith. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to relate to a variety of people and to empathise and challenge appropriately in a range of situations and contexts. 2. An understanding of how power affects relationships and how to use it appropriately. 3. An understanding of the communities in which they are serving. 4. An awareness of what it means to live as a public representative of the Methodist Church and Christian faith. 5. An understanding and the acceptance of the discipline of the Methodist Church and respect for the diversity of views within Methodism. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to appropriately challenge injustice and support marginalised communities. 2. The ability to engage with conflict appropriately.

	Early Competencies	Core Competencies	Further Development Competencies
6. The Church's ministry in God's World	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An understanding of <i>Our Calling</i> and how it relates to ministry in their local context. 2. The ability to see, and to draw the attention of others to, God at work in the world. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A good understanding of Ministry in the Methodist Church (particularly reports and statements by the Methodist Church). 2. Fidelity to the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith and the Methodist doctrinal standards (566 4ii). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to think in imaginative and creative ways when engaging with God's world through the Church's ministry. 2. The ability to recognise and develop new opportunities to engage with the local community as part of the Church's mission
7. Leadership and Collaboration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to pray with and for others, leading prayers that are appropriate and sensitive to the context. 2. An openness to developing their ability as someone who can lead God's people in aspects of worship. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to participate in the structures of a church and circuit and to regularly reflect on this experience. 2. A good understanding of the role and status of a Local Lay-Pastor in the life of the circuit. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to focus attention on a particular or specific community of people, as needed by the circuit.

17. Methodist Council part 2

	Early Competencies	Core Competencies	Further Development Competencies
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The ability to work collaboratively and as part of a team in ministry, knowing when to work alone and when to seek support. 4. An understanding of what it means to be seen by others as a leader in their local context. 5. A willingness to be flexible and adapt to changing circumstances 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Takes delight in leading with others, working collaboratively, and seeks to empower others for the good of the whole community. 4. The ability to enable the church community to participate in the mission of God in their local context. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. A broad understanding of the nature of leadership and the different ways leadership can be demonstrated, and the knowledge that collaborative leadership empowers the whole community.
8. Learning and Understanding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enthusiasm for lifelong learning and formation. 2. Growth in their own discipleship and a commitment to personal study of scripture and faith learning. 3. Demonstrates an awareness of contemporary world events and, whilst has some understanding, can articulate a Christian response. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ability to understand their learning and development needs through feedback and conversations with others and a commitment to engaging with meaningful development opportunities. 2. A strong understanding of pastoral ministry and knowledge of the approaches used in pastoral support of others and the ability to use these in their own ministry. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An excellent knowledge and understanding of the local context and has the openness to learn to critique cultural norms. 2. An appreciation of Methodist theology and a willingness to learn more about relevant topics.

	Early Competencies	Core Competencies	Further Development Competencies
	<p>4. A good understanding of pastoral ministry.</p> <p>5. A commitment to ongoing and appropriate training in Safeguarding.</p>	<p>3. An understanding of the power dynamics in pastoral relationships.</p> <p>4. A good understanding of Methodist policies and procedures, including safeguarding, GDPR, equality, diversity and inclusion, and Positive Working Together, and modelling and upholding good practice in relation to these in their work and context.</p> <p>5. Regularly meet with other Local Lay-Pastors in a community of practice endorsed by the Methodist Church.</p>	<p>3. A good understanding of how to enable others to be lifelong learners, and how to model being a learner.</p> <p>4. An understanding of how to keep up to date with new initiatives and learning opportunities and the ability to discern how and when to use these.</p>
9. Communication	<p>1. The ability to express faith naturally and authentically in ways that are appropriate, accessible and sensitive to the situation, using biblical and theological understanding.</p>	<p>1. The ability to work with small groups to successfully facilitate conversation and growth.</p> <p>2. The ability to select and use the most appropriate communication media and style for the context.</p>	<p>1. The ability to speak effectively in various forms and through various media.</p> <p>2. Advocating for the communities with whom they are local-lay pastor.</p>

17. Methodist Council part 2

	Early Competencies	Core Competencies	Further Development Competencies
	2. The ability to engage in one-to-one conversations that are meaningful, appropriate and supportive. 3. An active listener who seeks to understand and communicates effectively within their context, knowing when to speak and when to listen. 4. The ability to use language appropriately and carefully. 5. Approachable and humble enough to be appropriately challenged.	3. An ability to engage with the wider community in an accessible and meaningful way. 4. Effective communication skills for mission and evangelism, including being able to speak appropriately about God in a range of settings. 5. The ability to articulate a good understanding of the role and status of a Local Lay-Pastor in the life of the circuit.	

17/19. The Conference amends Standing Orders by adding a new Section 56A to read as follows:

Section 56A Local Lay-Pastors

56A0 The office of Local Lay-Pastor

- (1) Circuits may appoint lay persons to the office of Local Lay-Pastor in a Local Church or Churches in accordance with the requirements of Standing Order 56A1, and in this Section “the relevant Local Church” means the Local Church or Churches to which the appointment relates.**

- (2) **The duties of a Local Lay-Pastor shall be**
- (i) **to work under the oversight of the presbyter exercising pastoral charge in the relevant Local Church;**
 - (ii) **to undertake such specific pastoral work as is agreed when the initial appointment is made or may subsequently be agreed between the Circuit Meeting and the Local Lay-Pastor;**
 - (iii) **to exercise leadership in relation to other office-holders, volunteers and workers (including class leaders and pastoral visitors) who are exercising pastoral care in the context of the relevant Local Church; and**
 - (iv) **to share pastoral responsibility with those mentioned in head (iii) above and with the presbyter exercising pastoral charge, between whom and the Local Lay-Pastor there shall be appropriate mutual consultation on all matters concerning the relevant Local Churches.**
- (3) **In undertaking their office, Local Lay-Pastors shall not act as a replacement for a presbyter or deacon, but shall exercise a form of ministry complementary to the ministries of presbyters, deacons and other lay officers in enabling the Church's mission for the sake of the world. They shall provide a focused and recognised presence among a congregation or gathered community and in the wider community. They shall care for, enable, lead and represent the relevant Local Church, and shall represent the wider Church to it. They shall not by virtue of this office be authorised to preach or lead worship, and they shall not normally have an authorisation to preside at the Lord's Supper, nor administer baptism.**
- (4) **Any work (however described) the duties of which substantially consist of the duties set out in clause (1) above shall be deemed to constitute the office of Local Lay-Pastor and the provisions of this Section shall apply to the office and any holder of it.**
- (5) **Those who undertake this office may do so full-time or part-time, and in a voluntary capacity or as a paid employee. Where the office-holder is also a paid employee the provisions for lay employment set out in Section 57 and any additional connexional requirements and guidance shall apply in addition to the provisions of this Section.**

56A1 Appointment

- (1) **Those who are appointed to this office shall be lay members of the Methodist Church.**

17. Methodist Council part 2

- (2) Appointment shall be by the Circuit Meeting for a period not exceeding five years in accordance with the requirements of these Standing Orders and following any connexional requirements and guidance.**
- (3) Before deciding to undertake a Local Lay-Pastor recruitment and appointment process, and in any case where the stationing of ministers in the Circuit is under consideration, the Circuit Meeting shall consider the needs and opportunities in the Circuit and its mission in the world and develop a model for its future use of ministries. When developing that model the Circuit Meeting shall consider specifically whether it should include the appointment of one or more Local Lay-Pastors in the light of the description of that office in Standing Order 56A0. If the model includes such an appointment, the Circuit Meeting must also arrange for that appointment to be reviewed whenever the stationing of ministers in the Circuit is considered subsequently and in any event no later than five years after the date of any appointment to this office.**
- (4) Where the model adopted requires the appointment of one or more persons who will exercise the office of Local Lay-Pastor, the Circuit Meeting shall:**

 - (i) approve a written description for each such appointment which shall clarify the parameters and expectations of the appointment in accordance with connexional requirements and guidance;**
 - (ii) identify in relation to each such appointment by reference to competencies approved by the Ministries Committee under Standing Order 56A2(1) the initial competencies which must be possessed by any applicant for appointment and prepare a written statement of those competencies; and**
 - (iii) agree, following connexional requirements and guidance, the proposed arrangements for the support, line management and review of the Local Lay-Pastor in each such appointment, which shall include identifying a line manager.**
- (5) In the light of the documents produced pursuant to clause (4) above, the Circuit shall devise an open recruitment and appointment process. When the process has been completed and a proposed appointee has been identified, the Circuit Meeting shall issue a provisional licence for that person to serve as a Local Lay-Pastor for a probationary period of six months. If it is judged by the circuit leadership team or other body appointed by the Circuit Meeting to make such a judgment that the probationary period has been undertaken satisfactorily and the initial training specified in Standing Order 56A2(2) below has been completed successfully, the Circuit Meeting shall confirm the licence for a period no longer than five years from the start of the probationary period but subject to the further provisions of Standing Order 56A4.**

- (6) *After the probationary period the office-holder's performance shall be kept under review under Standing Order 56A3(2) until the Circuit has reviewed its model of mission and ministries as set out in clause (3) above.*
- (7) *The start of an appointment shall normally be marked by an appropriate form of commissioning service.*

56A2 Training

- (1) *The Ministries Committee shall approve generic competencies for both early and later stages of exercising the office of Local Lay-Pastor. It shall also approve a training pathway for those who exercise it, and shall ensure that connexional training records are kept in accordance with clause (3) below.*
- (2) *Training shall consist of:*
 - (i) *initial connexional core training in Methodist identity, issues of safeguarding and boundaries, pastoral care and theology;*
 - (ii) *initial specific training by agreement with the particular Circuit and in the light of the prior knowledge and experience of the Local Lay-Pastor to ensure that the person concerned is equipped for the particular appointment; and*
 - (iii) *continuing development and training through programmes approved by the Ministries Committee.*
- (3) *The Ministries Committee shall ensure that for each Local Lay-Pastor a connexional training record is created and kept up to date, listing all additional training and engagement in supervision (including both supervision as part of line management and reflective supervision) after that person has completed the core training. Local Lay-Pastors will be expected at least annually to demonstrate that they have engaged in some continuing development and have kept their supervision record up to date. If the record does not show that that expectation has been met within the past year and the person subsequently wishes to undertake the office of Local Lay-Pastor in a new appointment then further training requirements shall be identified and a programme for meeting them drawn up.*

56A3 Support and accountability

- (1) *Overall responsibility for the initial appointment, support and line management of the Local Lay-Pastor shall lie with the relevant Circuit Meeting. In fulfilling those tasks the meeting shall follow connexional requirements and guidance and may share resources with other Circuits in its own or neighbouring Districts, and where available draw on any connexional resources.*

17. Methodist Council part 2

- (2) *The Local Lay-Pastor's progress in development and training, needs and hopes for continuing development and training, and performance of the duties of the office shall be kept under review in accordance with the arrangements initially agreed or as subsequently varied (if at all).*

56A4 Termination of appointment

- (1) *Whenever the Circuit has reviewed its overall consideration of mission and ministries as required by Standing Order 56A1(3) it shall proceed in accordance with connexional requirements and guidance to review each particular appointment of a Local Lay-Pastor to determine:*
- (i) *whether there is a continuing need for such an appointment in its original or some revised form; and*
 - (ii) *if so whether there are exceptional circumstances requiring that a further licence be issued for the current appointee to continue in that appointment.*
- (2) *An appointment may be terminated by procedures that are in accordance with connexional requirements and guidance at the end of the probationary period referred to in Standing Order 56A1(5), or after any review of the model of ministry in the circuit conducted under Standing Order 56A1(3), or, if judged necessary by the Circuit Meeting, at some other time. In all cases termination shall be on one or more of the following grounds:*
- (i) *the post is judged to be redundant following the review of the Circuit's mission and its future use of ministries;*
 - (ii) *the appointee has reached the end of the relevant period of licence and it is not judged that there are exceptional circumstances requiring the issue of a further licence;*
 - (iii) *the appointee has failed to complete the probationary period successfully;*
 - (iv) *the appointee has failed to complete required training successfully;*
 - (v) *the appointee has failed to develop the necessary competencies or to engage in continuing development and training or supervision;*
 - (vi) *the appointee is judged through the appropriate procedures for that case as specified in connexional requirements and guidance to have engaged in conduct which warrants termination of the appointment.*

**SECTION Q
MEMBERSHIP OF THE MINISTERIAL CANDIDATES' AND PROBATIONERS'
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (MCPOC)**

1. The membership of MCPOC is governed by Standing Order 321 which ensures that most members of MCPOC are also current members of a district candidates' or probationers' committee or the student oversight committee, with a few other provisions. This causes difficulties for MCPOC because, if members leave the district or oversight committee (even temporarily in the case of the student oversight committee), then they are required to leave MCPOC. This has meant that MCPOC has lost expertise and continuity in its work.
2. For MCPOC to be able to function most effectively and with a full awareness of inclusion and diversity, there is also a need to ensure that certain members are alert to particular issues. Several members who are on district committees or the student oversight committee might also have a particular awareness of a particular issue, but MCPOC also needs the flexibility to appoint others if there are particular issues that are not represented by the current membership.
3. Therefore the membership structure outlined below is proposed to replace that set out in SO 321. DCC is an abbreviation of District Candidates' Committee, and DPC an abbreviation of District Probationers' Committee.

Skills/ experience needed	Length of office	Number of people	Member / consultant	Current members Numbers in bold italics denote those who are already counted in the lists elsewhere (ie they hold dual roles)
Recent ordinand in 3 rd , 4 th or 5 th year of ministry	3 year role	1	Member (presbyter or deacon)	none
DCC recent or current member	Up to 6 year role	3	Member	3

17. Methodist Council part 2

Skills/ experience needed	Length of office	Number of people	Member / consultant	Current members Numbers in bold italics denote those who are already counted in the lists elsewhere (ie they hold dual roles)
DPC recent or current member	Up to 6 year role	3	Member	2 one of whom retires August 2022
Queen's oversight committee recent or current member	Up to 6 year role	2	Member	2
District Chair	Up to 6 year role	1	Member (presbyter) Chair of MCPOC	1
Connexional Team member: Ministerial Coordinator for the Oversight of Ordained Ministries	Whilst in post	1	Member	1
Connexional Team member: Director of Learning for Ministry.	Whilst in post	1	Academic adviser Member	1
Representative deacons	Up to 6 year role	1	Member unless there are sufficient deacons in other roles (sufficient means more than 1)	1

17. Methodist Council part 2

Skills/ experience needed	Length of office	Number of people	Member / consultant	Current members Numbers in bold italics denote those who are already counted in the lists elsewhere (ie they hold dual roles)
Representative lay people	Up to 6 year role		Member unless there are sufficient lay people in other roles (sufficient means more than 1)	5
Representative presbyters	Up to 6 year role		Member unless there are sufficient presbyters in other roles (sufficient means more than 1)	6
Warden or Deputy Warden	Whilst in post	1	Member (deacon)	1
Lead on disability issues	Up to 6 year role	1	Possibly this person should have a disability. Member unless this is covered by another role.	1
Lead on issues arising from racial diversity	Up to 6 year role	1	Possibly from Global Majority communities (language communities included). Members unless covered by another role.	1
Lead on gender issues	Up to 6 year role	1	Member unless this is covered by another role.	none

17. Methodist Council part 2

Skills/ experience needed	Length of office	Number of people	Member / consultant	Current members Numbers in bold italics denote those who are already counted in the lists elsewhere (ie they hold dual roles)
Lead on LGBTQ+ issues	Up to 6 year role	1	Possibly from the LGBTQ+ communities. Member unless this is covered by another role.	1
Lead on mental health issues (including impact of trauma, bereavement etc)	Up to 6 year role	1	Member unless this is covered by another role.	1
Safeguarding advisor for the committee	Up to 6 year role	1	Keeps eyes open for these issues. Member unless this is covered by another role.	1
Representative to the Ministries Committee from MCPOC	Up to 6 year role	1	Dual role	1
Representative to MiTC	Up to 6 year role	1	Dual role	1
Representative to DPS annual meeting	Up to 6 year role	1	Dual role	1
Welsh speaker when needed	-	1	Consultant when needed	

Skills/ experience needed	Length of office	Number of people	Member / consultant	Current members Numbers in bold italics denote those who are already counted in the lists elsewhere (ie they hold dual roles)
Secretary of Stationing Advisory Committee when needed	-	1	Consultant when needed	

NOTES AND PRINCIPLES

- 'Recent' means within 3 years – applied to all roles
- The 'up to 6' year term can be flexible when needed but it can only be extended by a specific minuted decision made by MCPOC.
- At the outset members would be invited to serve for a defined period of 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 years in order to ensure that all will not retire at the same time
- The Chair of MCPOC is always a District Chair
- Two Deputy Chairs are appointed for a period of 3 years (extendable) from among the members of the committee ensuring there is a balance of lay/ordained and gender among the Chair and Deputy Chairs.
- All MCPOC panels are chaired either by the Chair or one of the Deputy Chairs
- The general principle is that members hold one primary role on the committee even if they actually cover more than one
- MCPOC will take care of the balance of age / gender / ethnicity / sexual orientation / order of ministry across the committee and will be intentional in making nominations for new appointments
- Where necessary MCPOC will ask for advice / training from particular people regarding particular issues.
- MCPOC will keep unconscious bias and diversity training up to date for whole committee
- All MCPOC members will have up to date safeguarding foundation module training
- MCPOC is always to be aware of theological difference between members of the committee and students / probationers
- MCPOC will be no smaller than 14 members and no larger than 20 members.
- Nominations for appointment will endeavour to ensure representation from all of the stationing regions:

17. Methodist Council part 2

Region	Districts
North East	Scotland, Shetland, Darlington, Newcastle
North West	Bolton and Rochdale, Cumbria, Lancashire, Manchester and Stockport, Liverpool, Isle of Man
Yorkshire	Yorkshire West, Yorkshire North and East, Sheffield
East Midlands	Lincolnshire, Nottingham and Derby, East Anglia, Northampton
Wales & West	Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury, Birmingham, Chester and Stoke, Wales, Synod Cymru.
South East	London, Beds Essex and Herts, South East
South West	Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, Plymouth and Exeter, Bristol, Southampton, Channel Islands

***RESOLUTIONS

17/20. The Conference receives the Report.

17/21. The Conference amends SO 321 as follows:

321 Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee.

- (1) The Methodist Council shall annually appoint a connexional Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee consisting of:
 - (i) no more than ~~three~~ **two** representatives of oversight committees of training institutions;
 - (ii) ~~eleven representatives of district Candidates Committees and district Probationers Committees, with not less than two from each type of committee within that total;~~ **three persons each of whom is a current or recent member of a district Candidates Committee and three persons each of whom is a current or recent member of a district Probationers Committee;**
 - (iii) one district Chair
 - (iiiA) **one recent ordinand in their third, fourth or fifth year of ministry**
 - (iv) [~~deleted~~]
 - (v) two of the Team members responsible for presbyteral candidates, initial presbyteral training and presbyteral probationers;

- (vi) one **Welsh speaking** representative of **Wales** Synod Cymru when the business requires it
- (vii) [*deleted*]
- (viii) further deacons where necessary to ensure that the committee includes at least two;
- (viiiA) further lay people where necessary to ensure that the committee includes at least two;**
- (viiiB) further presbyters where necessary to ensure that the committee includes at least two;**
- (ix) ~~the secretary of the Stationing Advisory Committee when the business requires it; [*deleted*]~~
- (x) the Warden or deputy Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order for all business other than the discussion of individual cases;
- (xi) up to five further members each of whom is to lead on one of the inclusivity issues (namely, disability issues, racial diversity issues, gender issues, LGBTQ+ issues and mental health issues), if such leadership is not given by another member of the committee;**
- (xii) a further member to be the safeguarding adviser to the committee if no other member of the committee is able to act as the safeguarding adviser.**

For the purposes of this sub-clause a person is a recent member of a committee or ordinand during the three years after membership ceased or after ordination (as the case may require).

- (2) The persons under heads (i) and (ii) of clause (1) above shall be nominated by the committees concerned in accordance with a rota approved by the council and include no fewer than six lay persons **by agreement among themselves as necessary.**
- (2A) The committee shall be no smaller than 14 members and no larger than 20 members.**
- (2B) The Secretary of the Stationing Advisory Committee shall be entitled to attend and speak at meetings as consultants to the committee when the business requires it.**
- (2C) (a) The term of appointment will usually be 6 years, subject to agreement with the person concerned, but the person appointed under head (iiiA) of clause (1) above shall be appointed for a term of three years only.**

17. Methodist Council part 2

- (b) A member of the committee appointed under heads (i), (ii), (vi) and (viii) to (viiiB) of clause (1) above is not required to vacate office if no longer eligible for initial appointment in the category in which that member was appointed or if an appointment in that category is no longer required.**
- (c) A member of the committee who has already served a six year term may only be appointed again if the nomination is supported by a minuted recommendation from the committee.**
- (2D) The member appointed under head (iii) of clause (1) above shall chair the committee. The committee shall appoint two deputy chairs from among its members who shall serve for an initial period of three years, which may be extended.**
- (2E) All members of the committee must have undertaken foundation level safeguarding training before their appointment takes effect. The committee must ensure that its members receive up-to-date training thereafter.**
- (2F) In nominating members to the Council for appointment the committee must seek to ensure that the committee includes members from all of the stationing regions and that a balance of age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and order of ministry is maintained.**
- (3) Reporting to the Ministries Committee as provided in Standing Order 32A1 the committee shall be responsible for the recruitment of candidates for the presbyterate **ordained ministry**, the administration of the regulations for candidates, and decisions about training requirements. It shall have oversight of the whole period of a person's training from acceptance as a candidate by the Conference until reception into Full Connexion and ordination, and in particular shall perform the functions prescribed in Section 72.
- (4) The committee shall appoint one or more student oversight committees for each training institution.
- (5) (a) The committee shall co-ordinate and guide the work of the oversight tutors of the training institutions in so far as it relates to the oversight of student presbyters and deacons. The oversight tutors shall ensure that reports and other services for the connexional and local committees are provided as required.

- (b) For every training institution, whether under the authority of the Conference or otherwise, the Conference shall appoint, upon the nomination of the Methodist Council, one or more oversight tutors to assist the student and connexional oversight committees in performing the functions specified in Standing Orders. Where more than one oversight tutor is appointed for the same institution one shall be identified as having oversight responsibility.
- (c) In relation to institutions within sub-clause (b) above any reference in these Standing Orders to the principal shall, unless this clause is expressly excluded or the context otherwise requires, be construed as a reference to the relevant Methodist oversight tutor.

SECTION R METHODIST MINISTERS' HOUSING SOCIETY

1. In response to the report of the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society, the 2021 Conference adopted the following Notice of Motion:

The Conference gives thanks for the longstanding relationship between the Methodist Church of Great Britain and the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society (MMHS).

The Conference recognises that MMHS is now a Private Limited Company by guarantee and not under the jurisdiction of the Conference and it is deeply thankful for it is Articles of Association expediting its objectives for Methodist presbyters and deacons (MMHS AA 2.1).

However, the Conference notes the proposed 95% rent increase over the next 11 years to 2032 is vastly beyond the current means of many supernumeraries or their widows/widowers.

The Conference recognises the range of incomes differs greatly and some currently in the Society benefit from very low rental rates when their household incomes are in excess of £40,000. However many household incomes are greatly less and the new rises have caused deep shock and fear in many across our Connexion. Therefore the Conference seeks to amend the report by adding the following resolutions:

57/2 The Conference asks for a collaborative conversation between Pensions, MMHS, the Secretary of the Conference, the Chair of the CAC and any other significant individuals who might find a sensible way of looking at how the Covenantal relationship between the Church and its retired ministers (& Widows etc.) can be expressed fully and appropriately.

17. Methodist Council part 2

2. Since the Conference in 2021, the Secretary of the Conference has met on three occasions with the Director of Finance and Resources, the Chair of the Connexional Allowances Committee and the CEO of MMHS to consider the covenant relationship of ministers with the Conference. The Pensions Manager was involved in the last of the meetings.
3. The group discussed the issues around the Notice of Motion at the Conference and tried to identify the key questions.
4. The group identified two overarching themes:
 1. The Covenant Relationship between the minister and the Conference.
 2. The relationship between MMHS and the Conference.

The Covenant Relationship between the Minister and the Conference

5. In relation to the first of these themes, the group noted the work done in 2017-18, particularly in the additional CAC report to the 2018 Conference (34), which identified many of the key issues around the covenant relationship. That report included an appendix which attempted to summarize the key themes of the covenant relationship though the Council was clear that it has no status other than a background paper to that report. In other words, it 'showed the working' of the CAC in responding to a memorial about the Conference's responsibility to its supernumerary ministers.
6. With that caveat, the group noted that the four strands of the relationship identified in that paper are still a helpful framework for considering the responsibility and it added a fifth. These might be defined as the reasonable expectations that supernumeraries have of the Church:
 - i. **Provision of a pension** - the group noted that the Council has asked for a review of the Methodist Ministers Pension Scheme and appointed a task group to do that work. Given that one factor in the conversation about the affordability of MMHS rent is the level of pension paid to the surviving spouse, the task group reviewing of the MMPS might be asked to consider the current arrangements for surviving partners in its work. The group has noted, however, that the surviving partner's pension is automatically provided and the member has the possibility to improve their benefits should they wish.
 - ii. **Reasonable expenses for ministry** – Supernumeraries are entitled to reimbursement for any costs they incur in their continuing ministry. Continuing ministry is an expectation (S0792) though what a Supernumerary can offer will vary in each case and stage of life.

- iii. **Pastoral Support** – There was much discussion in 2017-18 about the responsibility for pastoral support for supernumeraries which rests with the Chairs and Superintendents. The group noted, however, that the MMHS respects the confidentiality of its residents, so those offering pastoral care may not know that the supernumerary lives in an Housing Society property.
- iv. **Help with housing** – the MMHS is one way in which the covenant relationship is honoured by endeavouring to ensure that those who leave a manse on sitting down without having other accommodation are not left without a home. There are certain eligibility criteria which the MMHS has which are available from the Society on request and the Society wanted to note that its mission (about which it is passionate) is particularly to serve “presbyters and deacons of limited means” (and those dependents who can be considered beneficiaries too).
- v. **Care for (widowed) dependents** – part of the mission of the MMHS is to support the surviving dependents of a minister or supernumerary after their death. The group was asked to consider single occupancy rates but the Society has argued that those are unfeasible on the basis that the rent is so low already. The group also noted the danger of generalization - not all single occupants are necessarily of particular limited means.

The group also noted the danger the covenant relationship becoming paternalizing. All ministers and supernumeraries have autonomy to make their own decisions regarding their finances and housing. The group also noted that many of those in less affluent circumstances might be able to access state benefits as well. MMPS, MMHS and Connexional Team members are all involved in pre-retirement courses to help with planning. The group noted, however, that ministers might need to be encouraged to seek financial advice long before the last few years of active ministry, recognising changing circumstances and issues around the disposal of property owned before candidating.

The relationship between MMHS and the Conference

7. History and current position

The group heard that MMHS disputed some of the premises of the Notice of Motion. The relationship between MMHS and the Conference has not changed as a result of MMHS's conversion from being a community benefit society registered with the Financial Conduct Authority to being a company limited by guarantee (CLG) registered as a charity. MMHS followed the statutory procedure set out in s112 (1) (a) of the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. MMHS was not under the jurisdiction of the Conference prior to conversion and of course that remains the position after conversion.

17. Methodist Council part 2

When MMHS converted, pension liabilities were transferred to the CLG. The Methodist Council was party to the Deed of Participation and Agreement of Flexible Apportionment Arrangement relating to the Pension and Assurance Scheme for Lay Employees of the Methodist Church MMHS was grateful at the time for the Methodist Council's timely support in the process of conversion.

Regarding MMHS's Rent Plan, it is for a period of 12 years. The calculation of a 95% does not take account of the element of inflation which would have been applied each year if the Rent Plan were not in place.

The group was also told that those ministers (and their spouses/partners) who have a joint income in retirement of more than £40,000 are required to pay a supplement. The Society also wished to stress that in the letter which accompanied the Rent Plan it stated:

'Not one of our ministerial residents will be asked to pay extra rent if, after accessing the options we have suggested, they cannot meet the cost.'

Communication between bodies in the Church and MMHS

8. There is a willingness and eagerness from MMHS to regularly report and provide updates of their work to the Conference. The CEO of MMHS meets the Secretary of the Conference periodically and is part of the 'Methodist Family' group of Chief Executives.
9. The group was aware that some supernumeraries face significant financial challenges, part of which will be the cost of housing. Where there is awareness of such a case (often as a result of unusual circumstances at the time of retirement), there will usually be a meeting (typically involving the CEO of MMHS, the Chair of the CAC, the Secretary or Assistant Secretary of the Conference, one of the Wellbeing Advisers, and the supernumerary's District Chair) to consider all avenues of support.

Next Steps

10. On looking at SO 364 it was felt that this SO provided small but beneficial support. It is proposed that the editorial footnote to SO 364 be updated to provide an accurate description of MMHS, as follows:

The Methodist Ministers' Housing Society is a **charitable company limited by guarantee, Company Number 11929754 and Charity Numbers 1186758 (England and Wales) and**

SC050661 (Scotland) society registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, admission to membership of which is subject to the approval of the Conference.

***RESOLUTIONS

17/22. The Conference receives the Report.

17/23. The Conference amends SO 805 as follows:

805 (2) (a) A minister or probationer may apply to the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society for help with housing upon becoming a supernumerary, according to the Society's Rules for eligibility **criteria**.

Information about any possible implication of the rules **eligibility criteria** of the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society for the benefits of a minister undergoing a change in his or her conditions of service may be obtained through the Stationing Advisory Committee (for which see S.O. 323).

(b) The spouse of a minister or probationer may apply to the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society for help with housing upon becoming a widow or widower, according to the Society's Rules for eligibility **criteria**.

SECTION S CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL

The Council appointed a nomination panel to meet with candidates who were eligible to serve as the Chair of the Council. Following a careful process of discernment, the Council brings the name of the Revd Sonia Hicks for appointment by the Conference.

Reasoned statement

The Revd Sonia Hicks is the President of the Conference for 2021/22. She is currently Superintendent of the Wembley Circuit. Sonia has previously served on various roles in British Methodism, in the Irish Connexion and in the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and Americas. Sonia was the Convenor of the World Development and Relief Committee of the Methodist Church in Ireland, has served on the Oversight Committee for the Queen's Foundation, on MCPOC and on the Leadership Group of the Methodist Diaconal Order (now the MDO Support and Advisory Group). Sonia has experience of presiding over the Conference, chairing meetings and bringing a written and verbal report to a Conference. She appreciates the role of Chair of the Council.

17. Methodist Council part 2

Sonia recognises the importance of the Council's work and responsibilities, noting how it holds governance and pastoral care together. She is committed to an inclusive Council and Church, listening to the range of voices represented at the Council and ensuring that those voices are heard.

***RESOLUTION

17/24. The Conference appoints the Revd Sonia Hicks as Chair of the Council from 1 September 2022 for a four year term.

SECTION T ACTION FOR HOPE

1. The 2021 Methodist Conference, seeking to build on past work, and with a renewed sense of urgency, agreed an aspirational target to become a net zero Church by 2030³. The Council received a report which set out a plan of action for reaching that target.

Connexional plans and local plans

2. The plan outlined to the Council is a plan for the whole Connexion. It focuses on connexional-level aims and measuring systems. This plan is designed for MCB to work and measure progress on reducing carbon emissions at a connexional (or 'whole church') level. Alongside this, local churches, circuits and districts can (and should feel encouraged to) use more detailed, local measuring systems and resources. 360Carbon⁴, EcoChurch⁵, EcoCongregation⁶, the Energy Saving Trust⁷, the Big Clean Switch⁸ and the resources on the MCB website⁹ are particularly recommended.
3. Measuring and accountability can seem unnerving or daunting, but we should not be afraid of them: they are part of the heritage of Methodism. The classes and bands established by John Wesley enabled early Methodists to be accountable to each other about how each person was living the Christian life.

3 <https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/21664/conf-2021-3-methodist-council-part-1.pdf>

4 <https://www.360carbon.org/>

5 <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>

6 <https://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/>

7 <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/>

8 <https://bigcleanswitch.org/>

9 <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/environment-and-climate-change/>

This system was not designed to reproach, shame, or punish; but to encourage, free, forgive, love, and heal. Today, we are familiar with the Conference setting expectations and assessing compliance in other areas of our Church life, from the specification of accommodation for presbyters to the experience and theological understanding of our leaders of worship. 'Care for Creation' is an integral part of a Methodist Way of Life¹⁰, and the whole Connexion must work together and hold one another to account in Christian love for living this out.

4. However, the Conference resolution¹¹ that directed this work to be undertaken is unclear as to what entities are included within the definition of 'the Methodist Church'. While the aim should be that all entities that report/relate to the Methodist Conference should share the net-zero aspiration, how this is achieved will vary given the nature of the organisation.
5. Entities that are under the control of the Methodist Council (and are consequently included in the consolidated accounts as part of the registered charity) should be required to work towards net-zero. Consultation with each entity will take place as part of the Council's existing governance scrutiny process to determine how each entity will report progress. These entities are: the Connexional Team, London Mission Fund, North Bank Estate (Guy Chester Centre), Cliff College, Methodist International Centre (The Wesley), Southlands Methodist Trust, and All We Can
6. Entities that report to the Conference, but are not under the control of the Methodist Council, are invited to a regular annual meeting of Methodist bodies in the autumn. Consultation will take place as part of the gathering in 2022 to understand how they will support the net-zero aspiration.
7. Entities that relate to the Conference or form part of the broader Methodist family will be encouraged to adopt the net-zero aspiration, albeit the Conference will not exercise oversight in this respect. The Action for Hope task group will report on progress against this plan to the Council in their annual report.

Scope of the work

8. In moving towards the targets set by the Conference, the connexional principle is at work in how we approach the task, and how we envision its reach and its purpose.

¹⁰ <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/a-methodist-way-of-life/>

¹¹ <https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/21664/conf-2021-3-methodist-council-part-1.pdf>

17. Methodist Council part 2

9. The 'reach' of the Methodist Church stretches beyond local congregations and circuits. Firstly, for example to sites of historic interest and buildings of significance for our self-understanding. These places continue to provide new stimuli for remembering and interpreting who we are for today's world. As a connexional Church, we also offer support of all kinds to a range of buildings often in places historically deprived of material resource. These are also all places where the work towards net zero must be real.
10. Secondly, we work with a range of Partners in the World Church, by whose witness, wisdom and struggle we must be informed, challenged, convicted and inspired. Many of these Partners are seeing at first hand, in a way we cannot or do not, the current and devastating effects of climate change and environmental degradation. They have cultivated practical, theological responses to their context from which we must learn in ours.
11. Third and finally, we support and are in close relationship with institutions and places of learning, from Methodist-related universities to theological colleges to local schools: all of which, in different ways, are both urging us to intentional action and offering resources and vision for that work. Whether expressed in an academic research seminar or a primary school pupil's hopes for the future of their world, we must pay attention, remembering the vibrant, varied conviction we hold dear: of our connectedness to one another, even as we are interconnected too to all that God has made.
12. Taking seriously these theological and ecclesial foundations, then, we have a unique contribution to make as Methodists, both to understanding and in responding to the current crisis and the work towards net zero. It is proposed to engage in conversation with these key connexional partners and identify others, asking them to respond to a set of prompts for gathering experience, wisdom and vision, including for concrete practical actions. This might be work done alongside current consultations in areas, such as Walking with Micah and the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity strategy implementation, or drawing on the kinds of energy they are releasing for reflection and mission.
13. A small group will oversee this part of the work, including members of the Action for Hope (AFH) task group. They will draw up a longlist of partners with whom to engage, and offering those partners an invitation to participate in the wisdom-gathering exercise, perhaps via a standard template. The group can then assess how best the wisdom gleaned might be fed into the larger project and its goals. The AFH task group will report on the progress of this participative consultation exercise to the Council in their annual report.

Aims and measuring systems

14. The original aim set forth by the Conference of “net zero emissions by 2030”, is far-reaching and includes all of MCB’s activities, from ‘obvious’ sources, such as gas burned in combi-boilers to heat buildings, to ‘hidden’ sources, such as the emissions associated with the farming, processing and transport of tea served after worship. Measuring all of these emissions would be an enormous task – far beyond the capacity of current staff and volunteers, without ceasing many of the activities that MCB is called to do.
15. Indeed, the Carbon Reduction Strategy Group faced this same issue. When the Carbon Reduction Strategy Group reported to the Methodist Council in 2012¹², they noted that, *“It has however been difficult to measure or set a baseline of the Carbon output for the Methodist Church in Britain. A full benchmark would involve gathering data from a large number of churches, circuits and districts. When information has been sought to enable estimation of our Carbon Footprint, the collection of data by local trustees has often been considered a lower priority.”*
16. The group tried two different methods of data collection:
 - A ‘benchmarking’ exercise, following the model of the Diocese of London. They sought to research the carbon footprint of 100 churches and extrapolate from this to create an estimate of the connexional carbon footprint. However, the work had several major issues, including low uptake, unrepresentative churches engaged (ie only those who were already focused on environmental issues), inconsistent data input, IT issues, and that the surveying was very time-consuming.
 - A survey with support from the Carbon Trust. This survey was more successful in some ways – specific churches were chosen to take part which were deemed representative of the connexion, and the data gathered was more consistent (due in part to a better survey design). However, only 12 churches were surveyed, so extrapolating out from this to the (at the time) over 5000 churches in the connexion, inevitably created opportunities for inaccuracy.
17. Learnings from this past work include:
 - A need for greater uptake, including from churches who are not already engaged with environmental issues.

12 <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-conference/methodist-council/council-papers-archive/methodist-council-papers-23-24-january-2012/>

17. Methodist Council part 2

- A need to simplify surveying, asking fewer questions and using an existing and familiar surveying tool.
18. Therefore, the task group proposes asking every church to engage with this measuring, but to ask a very small number of questions, using the annual returns system, which is familiar and well-used.
 19. It is proposed that MCB measures only the three largest sources of emissions, and targets activity around reducing emissions in these areas. Measuring these sources is achievable and ensures MCB is focussing efforts on the areas where highest impact is possible.
 20. The Conference's reply to Memorial M6 (2020) recommends the use of the annual returns as a measuring system. The task group supports this recommendation, as it is a familiar system already in use and does not require a new form of data collection. The current rate of return is very good, with an average completion rate of 76%.
 21. Therefore, it is proposed that new questions (outlined below) are added to the annual returns questionnaire to facilitate data collection around carbon emissions. In order not to overwhelm those tasked with returns, it is further proposed that the current questions around environmental issues be reviewed by the AFH task group and some removed. It is anticipated that at least four questions can be removed.
 22. It is further proposed that the new questions added will be phased in and not initially made compulsory, in order to give people time to understand and adapt.

Asset-based aims

23. Aim one: All travel directly funded by MCB to have net zero emissions by 2030. This will involve reducing travel, choosing forms of travel that have lower associated carbon emissions, and carbon offsetting travel.
24. Over the course of the next 12 months, further reflection will be undertaken to discern appropriate milestones for the reduction in emissions related to travel. It is envisaged there will be one or two milestones (eg, in 2024 and 2027) reflecting both an absolute reduction in travel and a move to more sustainable forms of transport.
25. Measurement will be via an annual carbon footprint report for travel, produced by the Finance Team and submitted to the Council as part of the annual AFH

report. It is proposed that this includes the travel funded from Connexional Funds. It will be composed of a report from the Connexional Team (including connexional volunteers), composed of two elements:

- A report from Diversity Travel – amount of carbon emissions and amount offset
 - A report from the Finance system – amount of carbon emissions and amount offset
26. Aim two: All electricity and gas directly funded by MCB to have net zero emissions by 2030. This will involve reducing electricity and gas consumption, choosing electricity from renewable sources (eg wind, solar, tidal, etc), choosing 'green gas' (biomethane), and carbon-offsetting gas and electricity used.
27. Over the course of the next 12 months, further reflection will be undertaken to discern appropriate milestones for the reduction in emissions related to electricity and gas. It is envisaged there will be one or two milestones (eg, in 2024 and 2027).
28. Measurement will be via an annual carbon footprint report for gas and electricity, produced by the Finance Team and submitted to the Council as part of the annual AFH report. It is proposed that this includes the gas and electricity funded from Connexional Funds.
29. Aim three: The three largest connexional events (the Methodist Conference, the Superintendents Conferences, and the Methodist Children and Youth Assembly) to have net zero carbon emissions by 2030.
30. In recognition that these events have a high profile, both within and beyond MCB, it is proposed that work should be undertaken to make these events net-zero by 2030, so that they can be an example of best practice and Methodist commitment to care for creation for all to see.
31. It is proposed that the Connexional Team staff leading on planning these events collaborate, with the AFH task group, on creating a "low carbon event planning guide/checklist", which can then be employed across all events. The United Reformed Church already have a similar document and report finding it of much use in simply and easily ensuring their events are as low-carbon as possible. In addition, the Conferencing team at Central Hall, Westminster have "the ability to calculate the carbon footprint for each event and then give the client a

17. Methodist Council part 2

choice of ways to offset it.”¹³ It is hoped that a meeting can be convened with the conferencing team to learn from their work. The AFH task group will report to the Council on progress in this area in 2026.

32. Conversations are ongoing with the Diaconal Order about including the Methodist Diaconal Convocation in this aim.
33. Aim four: Increase the positive environmental impact of MCB’s investments.
34. The Central Finance Board (CFB) is aiming to set up a Global Climate Stewardship Fund in the next 12 months. It is anticipated a proposal will come before the Methodist Council in October 2022 recommending (subject to appropriate due diligence) the Council uses some of its existing funds invested through CFB to provide the ‘seed’ funding for this new Fund. Once set up, such a fund would be more heavily marketed at Methodist entities who already hold investments with the CFB. This would include reviewing the future of the Medium and Long Term Methodist Council Funds in which all the Council’s current investments are held.

Wisdom-based aims

35. Aim five: The Methodist Council to appoint a Resource Group to review and update Hope in God’s Future.
36. Hope in God’s Future is a helpful, urgent and wide-ranging document, and one that it is hoped will continue to receive attention and promote action. The task group recommends that any revisions to the report should include ongoing reflection with global, ecumenical and interfaith partners, perhaps especially among the Abrahamic faiths, from whom we have much to learn and whose wisdom should be brought to bear on our conversations.
37. It is proposed that the names for a new Resource Group should be offered to the Council in October 2023, and the Resource Group will then report to the Conference no later than 2025.
38. Conversations are already under way with the responsible team members of the JPIT and the Faith and Order Committee about this work.

13 <https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/17599/conf-2020-39-managing-trustees-of-the-methodist-central-hall-westminster.pdf>

39. Aim six: To have 50% of all Methodist churches registered with EcoChurch or EcoCongregation by 2026. To have 50% of the Methodist churches registered with EcoChurch or EcoCongregation having achieved a Bronze award by 2026. To have 20% of the Methodist churches registered with EcoChurch or EcoCongregation having achieved a silver award by 2026.
40. Though this aim is listed under “wisdom”, it actually involves work in all areas. The EcoChurch and EcoCongregation programmes are holistic schemes that provide clear direction and guidance for churches, circuits and districts to improve their teaching and practice in caring for creation. They are excellent programmes, which MCB is proud to recommend for use across the whole connexion.
41. The data in this section is based on figures provided by EcoChurch, though conversations have begun with EcoCongregation, there was not time to collate data before this report was finalised.
42. There are 521 Methodist churches (including LEPs of which Methodism is one of the partners) registered with the EcoChurch scheme to date. This represents 13.2% of all Methodist churches in England and Wales (the EcoChurch scheme does not cover Scotland). A forecast has been undertaken, based on historic registration rates since 2016, which indicates that if MCB maintains momentum, over half of all Methodist churches in England and Wales will be registered by 2026. The task group therefore proposes that MCB should aim to maintain this momentum and aim to have 50% of all Methodist churches in England and Wales registered with EcoChurch by 2026.
43. 155 Methodist churches (including LEPs of which Methodism is one of the partners) have achieved bronze EcoChurch awards and 51 have achieved silver. This represents approximately 22% of those registered having achieved bronze and 10% having achieved silver.
44. In conversations with A Rocha and Methodists across the connexion, there has been a distinct desire to increase the rate of awards. The task group therefore proposes the ambitious target of doubling the percentage of Methodist churches at each award level, ie, to have 50% of the Methodist churches registered with EcoChurch having achieved a Bronze award by 2026 and to have 20% of the Methodist churches registered with EcoChurch having achieved a silver award by 2026.
45. The AFH task group will create a plan, liaising with EcoChurch and EcoCongregation, which focusses on publicity and equipping churches, to achieve this aim, and will report back to the Council annually on progress.

17. Methodist Council part 2

Lifestyle-based aims

46. Aim seven: For Methodist members/adherents to reduce their carbon footprints to one ton per year, particularly via the three key areas of energy, travel and diet (the biggest contributors to personal emissions).
47. The average carbon footprint in the UK in 2020 is 4.85 tons per year¹⁴. To reach a carbon footprint of less than 1 ton per year by 2030, would require a reduction in carbon footprint of 15% each year.
48. The following measurement system is proposed for this aim:
 - There are 4004 churches (also called societies) in the connexion, 3% of which (120 churches) constitutes a statistically significant sample.
 - Select 120 churches from across the connexion that are representative of the range of contexts within MCB, (ie including rural/suburban/urban, poorer/more affluent, right-/left-wing politically, all of the countries/dependencies, etc)
 - Once a year, ask individuals in the congregations of each of these 120 churches to calculate their personal carbon footprint, and/or complete a short survey (fewer than ten questions) relating to their energy, travel and diet.
 - Track the responses from these 120 churches over the next 10 years to confirm the extent to which Methodist members/adherents are reducing their carbon footprint.
49. The Methodist staff of the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) will produce an annual report on the carbon footprint of members and adherents for incorporation into the annual AFH report to the Council.
50. Many of the activities in the Activity Appendix will support progress towards this aim, but of particular use will be work with the Methodist Way of Life, preaching resources, and the Learning Network/Cliff College.
51. Aim eight: To empower and equip advocates
52. The AFH task group has been in ongoing conversation with the grassroots Methodist Zero Carbon Group around recruiting and equipping volunteers to work in each district as an advocate for reducing carbon emissions. These advocates would also have a role in supporting the monitoring work under aim

14 <https://ourworldindata.org/per-capita-co2>

seven, ie facilitating the surveying, gathering the responses, and sending the data to the Connexional Team for processing and reviewing. The URC has a similar role in their Synods, entitled, “Green Apostle”.

53. Further conversations are needed, in particular with District Chairs and District Policy groups and staff, to discern how best to go about recruiting and equipping these volunteers. The AFH task group will report back to the Council in their annual report on progress in this area.

How this work continues

54. It is proposed that the AFH task group continue to oversee this plan. The AFH task group will report annually to the Council on progress against the eight aims, and on the activities. The task group will also produce a larger ‘evaluation and adjustment’ report for the Council in 2026 to do a fuller review at the mid-point of the journey and create aims and targets beyond 2030, including around reducing the amount of offsetting.
55. It is proposed that the AFH task group works in collaboration with colleagues across the Connexional Team to create a communications plan to launch and publicise the AFH plan. This will include:
- An outline of the plan (digital only) for circulation at the Conference and District Synods.
 - A digital only “just tell me what to do” resource, as requested by many diverse people through the AFH consultations, this will have five key actions that a Local Church can take straight away to start their journey to net zero.
 - A more detailed digital only resource that offers a practical path to net zero for circulation ahead of the Conference. The target audience will be church members and officers and will focus on initial steps to take in relation to:
 - church buildings – including roof, door and window maintenance
 - energy use – including switching to renewables and installing LED lights
 - people – including theological resources, travel policies, lifestyle choices and campaigning.
 - Resources and good news stories of local churches making changes, available on the MCB website.

*****RESOLUTION**

17/25. The Conference receives the Report.