

Ministries Committee

MC/22/41

Meeting date	2-4 April 2022
Contact Name and Details	The Revd Gill M Newton, Chair of the Ministries Committee chair@sheffieldmethodist.org
Action Required	Decision
Resolutions	<p>41/1. The Council receives the report.</p> <p>41/2. The Council recommends to the Conference the amendment to Standing Order 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;</p> <p>41/3. The Council directs 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.</p> <p>41/4. The Council directs the Strategy and Resources Committee to consider how Supervision training for supervisors of lay employees should be provided by our established training teams and funded by the employing churches, circuits or districts.</p> <p>41/5. The Council recommends the final report of the Candidating Review Group to the 2022 Conference, subject to some further fine tuning.</p> <p>41/6. The Council directs the Ministries Committee in consultation with the Stationing Committee to conduct a thorough review of the stationing processes, and report to the Conference in 2023.</p> <p>41/7. The Council approves the Terms of Reference and Membership of the Stationing Review Group.</p> <p><i>41/8 is withdrawn</i></p> <p>41/9. The Council approves the Terms of Reference for the Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry.</p>

Summary of Content

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

INTRODUCTION

1. The Ministries Committee is charged with responsibility to keep in constant review the life of the Methodist Church as it relates to Ministries, to indicate what changes are necessary or what steps should be taken to make the work of the Church more effective, to review the formational and support needs of those who exercise ministry on behalf of the Church, and to report annually to the Methodist Council. Many of the pieces of work currently being undertaken are interdependent with each other and with previous decisions of the Church, for example the 2020 Conference Report *Changing Patterns of Ministry* 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 twice since the 2021 Conference on 7 September 2021 and 5-6 February 2022, and will have a further meeting on 11 May 2022.
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 (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 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. 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 80,155).
- 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 number of local preachers reported to have died was 346.

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.

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;

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

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.

Local Lay-Pastors

41. The Changing Patterns of Ministry group continues its work in this area, and will bring resolutions to establish the office of Local Lay-Pastor. The Ministries Committee discussed this work at its February meeting and recommended that the Ministries Team do some further work on the competencies for Local Lay-Pastors to present to the April Council in a separate report.

Supervision for Lay Officers in the Methodist Church

42. 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

43. 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.

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

44. 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.

Candidating Review Group

45. The Committee has monitored the work of the Candidating Review Group (CRG) which was chaired by the Revd Dr Roger L Walton, who presented its final report to the Committee in February 2022. The group has scrutinised the proposed scheme rigorously and considers it viable and fit for purpose in the Methodist Church. Whilst the scheme is different in some ways from the current arrangement, it will need no additional connexional finance. In summary, a new candidating process is to be set in place, beginning in September 2023. The proposals of the CRC will be brought to the Council as a separate report.

Candidating Numbers

46. The Ministries Team is keeping these numbers under regular review.

MATTERS RELATING TO ORDAINED MINISTRY

Stationing Review

47. 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. Terms of Reference and Membership of the review group are attached to the report.

Types of station / Stationing Processes

48. 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

49. 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

50. 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

51. 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 Dr Kenneth G Howcroft (previous Conference reports and other documents). They presented their findings to the task group 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.

52. 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.

53. 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 6 days of 2 sessions a week or fewer days if the 3 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

54. 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

55. 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.
56. 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 Covenant (The Code of Conduct)

57. The Ministerial Covenant and an accompanying document *Ministry Support and Accountability* was reviewed. The committee welcomed the redrafts praising how feedback had been woven into this iteration. The committee could see how the Ministerial Covenant could be seen as a foundation on which to build the minister’s handbook, Ministerial Development Review (MDR) and Reflective Supervision.
58. The Ministries Committee approved of the clearly stated expectations of ministers and the Church. The Committee noted that ‘commitments and expectations’ do not constitute a code of conduct *per se* but instead place this within our tradition, and were in favour of this. Some changes were suggested including a review of the title to better reflect that this is a document for the whole Church.
59. The Committee recommended that it should be made explicit how the Covenant might be used and gave thanks to the working group for their hard work as they seek to bring a final report to the 2022 Conference. Having received the Ministries Committee feedback the working group are making minor alterations to the Covenant document and will title the document *The Covenant Relationship between the Church and its ministers*. The Covenant document will be presented to the Council as a separate report.

Ministerial Formation - exceptions to the maximum length

60. 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.

Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee (MCPOC)

61. A small task group of MCPOC has reviewed the membership of the MCPOC. Membership will still be representative, but will not be necessarily be representative of specific Districts or Oversight bodies. In this way the committee may retain continuity and knowledge. Changes to Standing Order 321 were agreed by the Council in January 2022. There will be a separate paper to the Council bringing reasoned statements for all MCPOC members alongside the decision about the restructure.

Stationing Online Profiles

62. 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.

Supervision Reference Group and draft Reflective Supervision Policy 2021-2026

63. 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

64. 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.

Terms of Reference for the Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry

65. The Committee recommends to the Council the attached Terms of reference.

STUDENT MATTERS

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

66. 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.

OTHER MATTERS

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

*****RESOLUTIONS**

41/1. The Council receives the report.

41/2. The Council recommends to the Conference the amendment to Standing Order 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;
(paragraph 37)

41/3. The Council directs 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.
(paragraph 42)

41/4. The Council directs the Strategy and Resources Committee to consider how Supervision training for supervisors of lay employees should be provided by our established training teams and funded by the employing churches, circuits or districts.
(paragraph 42)

41/5. The Council recommends the final report of the Candidating Review Group to the 2022 Conference, subject to some further fine tuning.
(paragraph 45)

- 41/6. The Council directs the Ministries Committee in consultation with the Stationing Committee to conduct a thorough review of the stationing processes, and report to the Conference in 2023.**
(paragraph 47)
- 41/7. The Council approves the Terms of Reference and Membership of the Stationing Review Group.**
(paragraph 47)
- 41/8. *Withdrawn***
- 41/9. The Council approves the Terms of Reference for the Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry.**
(paragraph 65)

Appendix A - Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry - Draft Terms of Reference

(See also CPD Book VII, Section C(16) Deliverance Ministry including Exorcism: Interim Guidelines)

The Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry will be appointed by the Conference and will report annually to the Ministries Committee. The Panel will meet as and when required, at least annually.

1. Membership

1.1 The Panel will consist of no fewer than six and no more than nine persons, including a chair of the committee. The panel will include representatives of the following roles/bodies:

- An individual with a broad understanding of Methodism and its practices, to act as Chair of the Panel.
- A Chair of District.
- The Director of Safeguarding or their representative.
- The Head of Ministries or their representative.
- At least two members with practical experience in Deliverance Ministry.
- Up to three other members with experience as listed below.

As far as possible the members of the committee between them will have experience and expertise in the following areas and their experience will have been acknowledged by others:

- Practical experience in Deliverance Ministry and its safe application.
- Awareness of difference practices, approaches and ways of understanding Deliverance Ministry.
- Awareness and expertise of Safeguarding issues.
- Awareness and expertise of Mental Health issues.
- Experience of collaborative working.

The Panel may invite such other observers or consultants, from within and beyond the Connexional Team, as appropriate.

1.2 There will be a robust discernment and appointment procedure before nominations to the Conference are made, not only for reasons of good practice but also because the Panel will require specific gifts and experience. For deliverance ministry to be practised in the Methodist Church there need to be people suitably gifted and equipped to oversee it. The Secretary of the Conference will oversee a selection and discernment process for membership of the Panel so that nominations can be made to the Conference.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 The Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry will have oversight of this ministry, including:

- responsibility for the appointment of practitioners,
- keeping a record of all who are so authorised,
- responsibility for the network of deliverance ministry practitioners,
- responsibility for the appointment of clinical supervisors of Deliverance Ministry,
- liaison with the District Chairs on Deliverance Ministry matters,
- liaison with ecumenical links.

2.2 The Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry will have oversight of training materials and will regularly review the content of the training and include any recommendations in its report to the Ministries Committee.

2.3 The Panel will also act as an advisory body for Deliverance Ministry in the Methodist Church, particularly for District Chairs.

2.4 This document to be reviewed in 2024 by the Ministries Committee.

Appendix B - Review of Stationing Processes - Draft Terms of Reference

Introduction

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. The terms of reference and membership of the review group is to be presented to the Methodist Council at its April 2022 meeting.

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 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.

Membership of Review Group

10. The Membership of the Review Group will consist of up to ten persons who bring specific skills and experience to the group including:
- Chair of the Review Group – A current or former Lay Stationing Rep with recent experience of our stationing processes. To be nominated by the Stationing Committee
 - The Convener (The Assistant Secretary of the Conference)
 - The Head of Ministries (The Revd Dr Andrew D Wood)
 - The Ministerial Oversight Officer (The Revd Dr Claire R Potter)
 - The Warden of the Diaconal Order (or her substitute)
 - A current or former Circuit Steward with recent experience of our stationing processes.
 - A Chair of District (to be nominated by the Chairs' Meeting)
 - The Equality and Diversity Inclusion Officer (Mr Bevan Powell)

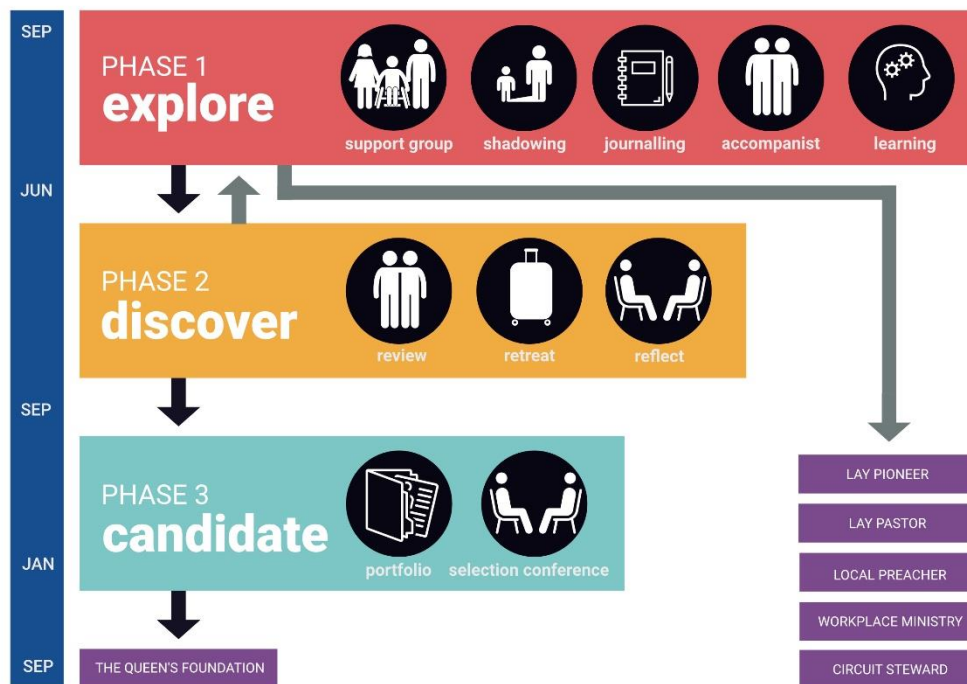
Appendix C – Report of the Candidating Review Group

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.

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



The work of the Candidating Review Group

1.1. The membership of the Candidating Review Group (CRG) is in Appendix A.

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'. The brief is set out in Appendix B.

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. The full list of groups and individuals is listed in Appendix C. Members also read and discussed a number of relevant ministry and research papers including the research carried out by Lyn McChlery and Philip Richter, the Changing Patterns of Ministry Report (Conf. 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. A full list is in Appendix D.

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 and 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, 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 engaged 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, volunteer 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 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 and 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 (see SO 710: 'Qualifications'), 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 McChlery 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.
- 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 '**licensed**' and have an open, variable length of time to explore and find their vocation with learning opportunities provided by the church. There are various exit 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-staged, if you count the 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 (PVG in Scotland) for work with 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
- 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 organised 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. For a fuller description of the role of the accompanist, see Appendix F.
- 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.

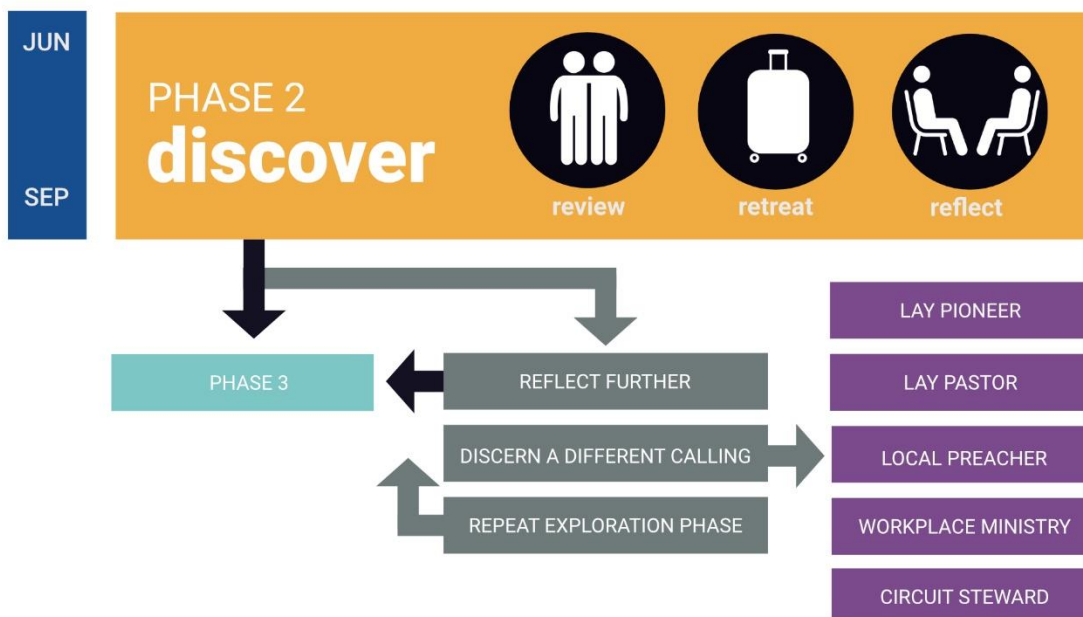


Phase 2: Ordained Vocational Advisory

- 5.8. 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.
- 5.9. 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;
 - reflecting on the criteria;
 - an understanding of the covenant relationship with the church – e.g. discipline, public representative ministry etc.;
 - the ability to articulate a 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;

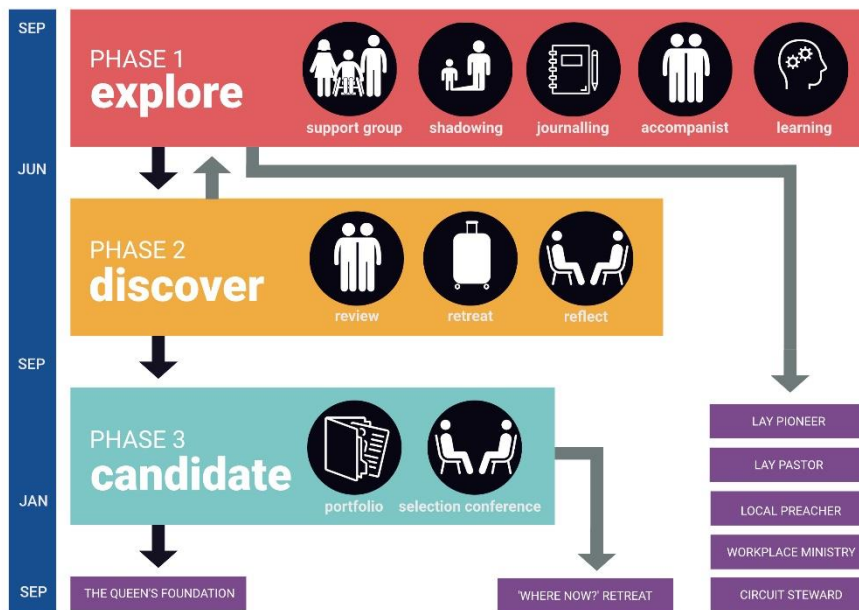
The individual and their accompanist would produce an agreed record of the guided conversation, including the main elements of the conversation, any gaps identified, questions to consider or concerns to address. A summary of this would be shared with the person's Superintendent Minister.

- 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 Ministry Advisory Group (OVAG). The person meets, either in person or on zoom (their choice) with three members involved in candidating (eg, 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 minister 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.



6. Phase 3: Candidating for Ordained Ministry

- 6.1. **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 group activities, including group preparation of worship. Those recommended for training, subject to 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.
- 6.2. Timeline**
- 1 October - deadline for submission of Application form
 - October/November – conversations with Warden of the MDO for diaconal candidates
 - 1 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.
- 6.3. **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. An outline of the possible contents of the portfolio appears in the full details in Appendix E.
- 6.4. **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 8 panels of 6 people. Each panel will meet with up to 4 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. A full outline of the timetable can be viewed in Appendix E.
- 6.5. 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.



7. Strengths of the proposed candidating process

- 7.1. It would shorten the process from the sensing of a call to the point of ordination.
- 7.2. It removes the element of perceived conflict between decisions at DCC and those at CSC
- 7.3. It removes some of the (perceived) barriers to be eligible to candidate.
- 7.4. It prepares people more thoroughly for the testing of the call.
- 7.5. It would be inclusive of a wide range of people, reflecting the growing number of ways leadership in the church is developing.
- 7.6. It gives panel members longer time with candidates.
- 7.7. It would be more sensitive to cultural, heritage and other forms of diversity.
- 7.8. It provides accompaniment throughout the process.
- 7.9. It continues to value and benefit from those currently involved in District panels and CSC.
- 7.10. It would give the Queen's Foundation more preparation time for recommended candidates.
- 7.11. It would ease timetable pressures on panels at CSC in for example, allowing a longer period for completion of paperwork and appeals.

Appendix A: Membership of the Candidating Review Group (CRG)

The Revd Matt Finch, Connexional Team, Pioneering and Church Planting Officer and former member of CSC

Victoria Loveday, former lay member of CSC, Children and Youth Coordinator Sheffield District, previously the national coordinator of volunteers for the Girls Brigade

The Revd Andy Moffoot, a presbyteral member of CSC and secretary to the CRG

The Revd Dr Claire Potter, Connexional Team, Ministries Team officer responsible for candidating

The Revd Julian Pursehouse, Chair of the East Anglia Methodist District

Alison Ransome, Connexional Team Vocations Officer

Deacon Kerry Scarlett, a diaconal member of CSC and former Diaconal Tutor at Queen's Foundation. Currently a regional Learning and Development officer.

The Revd Marcus Torchon, Superintendent Minister of the Coventry and Nuneaton Circuit.

The Revd Dr Roger L Walton, (Chair), Supernumerary and former President of the Conference

The Revd Kan Yu, presbyter in the Teddington Circuit and a member of the Fellowships Group sub-committee

Appendix B: Brief of the CRG

Ministries Committee Meeting 2021-1, Wednesday 9 September 2020

AIMS	<p>To develop a candidating process which:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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 2. 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 3. 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 4. is both robust in what it expects of candidates but pastoral as it responds to potential identified and shares outcomes of the process 5. does not put unnecessary barriers in the way of those who have a genuine sense of call
WHAT	<p>A root and branch review of all current processes from Call to Acceptance for training as a student minister</p>
WHY	<p>Length of time from call to acceptance can feel daunting. Does it need to be as long?</p> <hr/> <p>Numbers of candidates have been reducing. The average being accepted each year is 20-25 (over the years 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020).</p> <hr/> <p>Numbers of people involved at all stages in discernment and whether this is now disproportionate to the numbers of candidates.</p> <hr/> <p>General changes in the size of the British Methodist Church – and whether this process is proportionate.</p> <hr/> <p>Costs of all elements particularly CSC</p> <hr/> <p>Contact time. It has been said that contact time of committees with candidates could be greater (both at the District and CSC)</p> <hr/> <p>General changing shape of ministry. Work is needed to address the resolutions from the Changing Patterns of Ministry report from Conference 2020 and Conference 2021. Also response to ‘God for All’ (evangelism and growth strategy).</p> <hr/> <p>Different media now available for discernment, than physical face to face meetings.</p> <hr/> <p>Concern about poor theological literacy.</p> <hr/> <p>Concern about candidates struggling to discern or describe their call.</p> <hr/> <p>Concern about poor knowledge of the breadth of Methodism.</p> <hr/> <p>Questions about how lay people can engage in the discernment processes by being members of panels (practical issues such as time off work).</p> <hr/> <p>Quality control and consistency across the Connexion and across the processes.</p>

Appendix C: People and Groups Consulted

Rev Dr Nicola Price Tebbutt	Convenor, Changing Patterns of Ministry
Rev Dr Trip Lowery	Director of Vocational Discernment and Candidacy, Division of Ordained Ministry, UMC
Chairs of Districts	Via two sessions for Chairs Meeting
Diaconal Order	Warden and Deputy Warden
Rev Ken Howcroft	Former assistant Secretary of Conference
Ed Olsworth-Peters	Church of England National Pioneer Development Advisor
Revd Dr Jane Craske:	Director of Methodist Formation and Co-Director of the Centre for Ministerial Formation (Queens)
CSC Members 2021	Participants in current process
Deacon Eunice Attwood	Connexional team with responsibility for Church at the Margins and former tutor at the Queens Foundation
Major Janet Robson	Territorial Candidates Director, Candidates Unit, William Booth College
Rev Gill Newton	Chair of Ministries Committee Progress report to Ministries Committee
Kumar Devabalan	Assistant Director of Finance - Connexional Team.
The Queen's Foundation staff	Jane Craske; Gary Hall; Judith Rossall; Julie Hudson; Mel Beaven; Rachel Starr;
Connexional Selection Committee Co-chairs	David Hinchliffe, Ian Murray, Paul Kybird
Rev Paul Wood	Interim Director of the Ministries Team
Richard Armiger	Director of Regional Learning & Development
Justice Dignity & Solidarity	Bevan Powell & Jill Marsh
Bob Bartindale	Ministry Development Officer for Worship and Local Preachers
Gary Hopkins	Ministry Development Officer
Rev Dr Jonathan Hustler	Secretary of Conference
Fellowship Groups	Leao Neto; Stephen Poxon
Rev Dr Philip Luscombe	Candidates Portfolio Assessor, Former Director of the Wesley Study Centre in Durham and Principal of Wesley House, Cambridge
Rev Andy Fishburne	Discipleship and Faith Formation Officer, part of the Connexion's Evangelism and Growth Team
Rev Dr Jonathan Dean	Director of Learning for Ministry
Rev Trey Hall	Director of Evangelism and Growth
Learning Network Vocations Group	

Appendix D: Papers considered

- Paper MC 1920-1-J – Review of Candidating - Overview
- Paper MC 2021-1-F(1) - The Methodist Church, Major Review of the Process for Candidating for Ministry
- Paper MC 1920-2-P - Vocations: Candidate Numbers

- Ministries Committee | Meeting 1415-3 | Wednesday 8 July 2015 | The Queen's Foundation Paper G | Candidate Support Working Group - Final Report
- Ministries Committee Meeting 1819-3, 10.30 – 16.00, Saturday 18 May 2019 at Methodist Church House, Richmond Room Paper MC 1819-3-P Report from Ministerial Candidates' Selection Committee
- Ministries Committee Meeting 2021-1, Wednesday 9 September 2020 – online meeting Paper MC 2021-1-G - Cultural and Language Specific Ministry Particularly with Regard to Candidating and Ministerial Training
- Candidating statistics 2010-2021
- Changing Patterns of Ministry: Conference Agenda 2020-34
- Ministry in the Methodist Church: Conf Agenda 2018-32 and Conf Agenda 2021-8
- The Theology and Ecclesiology Underpinning The Diaconate and the Methodist Diaconal Order: Conf Agenda 2019-25
- How do you know it's God? The theology and practice of discerning a call to ministry in Church assessment conferences. Lynn M. McChlery, BA(Hons), BD(Hons), MLitt, AFHEA Research conducted in the Department of Theology & Religion, University of Durham for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy 2018
- Vocations Strategy Project Report: Revd Dr jPhillip Richter Research Document, Sept 2019
- Mapping the links between "Vocations Strategy Project Report" September 2019 (barriers to Candidating research) and Developing Vocations strategies.
- C.1.2 severely limited deployment form 2020-2021
- Thoughts on limited deployability from a superintendent seeking to navigate this with a candidate in 2020-2021
- Minister in local appointment and sector minister – history
- Feedback from other Methodist Conferences (UMC & Methodist Church Nigeria)
- Developing Vocations, "Encouraging Tent Making Ministry"; Hans Njoh
- Reflections on the connexional candidates selection committee 2021 Claire Potter 26.4.21
- Feedback from Portfolio Assessors: June 2021
- Feedback from District Candidates Secretaries & Candidate Support Leaders: June 2021
- "The Methodist church candidating process - costs and involvement" prepared for Ministries Committee September 2019 but not presented because CSC Co-Chairs felt it was too complex.
- Chair of District, Julian Pursehouse, Reflections 07-2021
- All Current Paperwork relating to existing candidating
- members not included above.
- Final Draft: Methodist Church Equality Impact Assessment produced by Justice Dignity and Solidarity

Appendix E: Additional Details

The Portfolio

From the candidate

These are suggestions for inclusions, for which some guidance will be given, but candidates are free to include any submission that they believe will help the panel understand their sense of calling and offer. Elements can be submitted in video, audio, or written forms.

- “My Story”. Tell us “who you are”. Testimony and articulation of Call?
- Self-Evaluation in relation to the Candidating criteria
- Reflection/Annotating on an extract of the journal (from Phase 1)
- Clear evidence of engagement with ‘Our Calling’ and a Methodist Way of Life.
- Reflection on being an “Explorer” or a “Discoverer”
- Evidence of engaging in learning and theological reflection
- Evidence of leading worship
- A book review - the list of book titles will be shared in Phase 2
- Evidence of understanding of British Methodism

From other parties

- The letter from Ordained Ministries Advisory Group
- A reference from the Circuit Leadership Team
- A reference from a Critical Friend and/or Accompanist
- A supervisor’s report from any formal placement undertaken (in Phase 1 or from prior experiences). If none has been undertaken, this may be a reference from someone who has worked with the candidates in a church setting.

The Selection Conference Outline Timetables

Day 1

12.30	Lunch followed by brief Full Committee meeting
2-3 pm	Candidates Arrive
3.00-3.30	Coffee/Tea Worship & Introduction
4.00-4.45	1 to 1 conversation
5.00	Group Presentation: 5 minute presentation plus 10 minute conversation on presentation plus 10-15 general conversation re portfolio (concentrating on good things in the portfolio, allowing the candidate to expand and talk freely).
6.30	Dinner
7.30-8.30	Group Activity to prepare devotions for panel
9.00	Evening Prayers in panels led by candidates

Day 2

7.30	Communion
8-9.00	Breakfast
9.15-12.30	Triangles (a) (b) and (c) 30 minutes contact with each candidate plus 15 minutes preparation and 5 minutes write up
1.00	Lunch
2.00-3.30	1 to 1 conversation follow up on first conversation, with the same panel member. This is a chance for candidate to self-reflect on how they have experienced the process and anything that has emerged for the candidate.
3.30	Tea/Coffee
4.00	Group Activity (Creative) with Panel Chairs observation and other panel members preparing for group conversation 2
6.00	Dinner
7.00	Panel Meeting (Structured time of Candidates with Chaplains)
9.00	Worship All Together

Day 3

7.30	Communion
8.00	Breakfast
9.15	Panel Conversation 2 with each candidate Panels of Reference as required
1:00	Lunch (Candidates depart after lunch) Final Panel Decision and Full Committee vote

Appendix F: THE ACCOMPANIST – Role, Recruitment, Agreements and Process

1. INTRODUCTION

One feature that runs through all three phases of the proposed scheme is the work of the accompanist. This person will accompany the explorer through the 10-month programme and, where individuals decide to test their calling to ordained ministry, the accompanist will continue with them through the next phases. This is a vital ingredient for several reasons.

- It provides an ongoing relationship of conversation and reflection.
- It makes available accompanists who are alert to and sensitive to cultural differences.
- It affirms the person throughout the processes whatever the outcome.

2. QUALITIES OF AN ACCOMPANIST

An accompanist needs to be:

- Skilled in helping others reflect on their experience;
- Familiar with the wide range of ministries in the church, including ordained ministries;
- Sensitive to the variety of people and cultures within the current Methodist church;
- Have time to spend with explorers on their journey.

3. RECRUITMENT PROCESS

A. Identifying

- i. People who might be possible accompanists
 - DCSs
 - Other members of DCCs
 - Ex members of CSC
- ii. People to identify possible accompanists
 - DCSs
 - Chairs of district
 - LN candidates' support officers
 - Superintendents
 - Fellowship Group chaplains
 - District officers – Mission enablers
 - NPNP communities

B. Application process – safer recruitment

- i. To be eligible:
 - References – 2 (lay and ordained) – these need to be assessed to show the person has the necessary experience/qualities
 - Evidence of safeguarding training and DBS as appropriate
- ii. Competencies and role description to be circulated widely. Consider developing competencies with the usual 9 headings with specific sub-sections for accompanists.
- iii. Application Form – needs to mirror the areas in the form that the explorer/discoverer completes. (See Matching Process below)
- iv. Fairly informal conversation over zoom with an officer from the Ministries Team who has a guidance form with suggested questions which will include:
 - Their particular context, skills, experience
 - Identify any limitations to their offer
 - Geographical limitations or travel issues
- v. Summary report from these conversations is written by the officer, who with a responsible group, appointed by the Ministries Committee will make the decision as to whether or not to nominate them to become accompanists
- vi. Reasoned statements are produced for those being nominated

C. Induction

- i. Shadowing another accompanist? Or at least talking with them
- ii. Attending some regional groups before they start
- iii. Buddy with experienced accompanist once they start
- iv. Commitment to initial and ongoing annual training

D. Review

- i. Once they are actively accompanying – a 6 month review meeting with the officer from the Ministries Team about their role in the process (but not to discuss the content of their conversations with explorer/discoverer).

4. MATCHING PROCESS

A. Explorer / discoverer completes a form indicating:

- i. The qualities they would value in an accompanist (eg. Supportive or challenging in approach)
- ii. Anything specific they feel the accompanist should be aware of
- iii. Anything particular they would like to explore
- iv. Whether they would like the accompanist to share any characteristics with them or to be different (e.g. language, gender, cultural background)
- v. Their preferred format of meeting – zoom or face to face
- vi. Accessibility issues including learning needs and reasonable adjustments
- vii. Geographical restrictions

B. Brief guidance notes, and a sample of this form to be completed to assist superintendents/local ministers or other supporter when they help explorers/discoverers to complete the form. Guidance notes will explain that an ‘exact’ match may not be possible - but that every effort will be made to take into account key things named on the form.

C. The officer then makes the best matches – using the accompanists’ application form and the explorer/discoverers’ form.

D. Both Accompanist and Explorer/Discoverer are asked to confirm that they are happy with the matching before proceeding.

5. THE ‘WAYS OF WORKING’ AGREEMENT – BETWEEN ACCOMPANIST AND THE EXPLORER/DISCOVERER

A ‘ways of working’ agreement will be drawn up and signed by Explorer/Discoverer and the Accompanist, covering timing, frequency and structure of meetings, together with expectations and boundaries. Below is an outline of detail of such an agreement.

1. The Purpose and Function of Accompaniment	Please note below any comments from your conversation on these specific areas
This is for a specific purpose for a specific period of time. It is expected that it will continue through to the recommendation at the end of candidating or the discernment of a different path.	
Please spend some time making as explicit as possible the purpose of this relationship – i.e. for the accompanist to walk with the explorer/discoverer on their journey of discernment. This may mean that the explorer/discoverer reflects on all areas of their life	

<p>This relationship is not either spiritual direction, supervision or therapy/counselling. The focus is on vocational discernment. The accompanist does not have a decision making role in the vocational discernment. Their role is to walk alongside and help the explorer/discoverer to discern.</p>	
<p>The accompanist will be attentive to any area of vocational discernment that the explorer/discoverer wishes to focus on and will also be expected to encourage wider exploration.</p>	
<p>Time – commitment by both parties to be prepared, present and engaged at all arranged meetings and to make these a priority</p>	
<p>Please negotiate the best ways to work together.</p>	
<p>It is expected that the explorer/discoverer will be proactive, prepare for each meeting and will be open to engage fully in the process (give and take).</p>	
<p>Please identify the level of contact the explorer/discoverer can have with the accompanist through the relationship. In between the core moments of contact, agree how contact can be made, frequency, expected response times and preferred methods of contact.</p>	
<p>The core expectation is that:</p> <p>For explorers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An Initial meeting before first meeting of cohort ▪ Attend the first cohort regional sessions ▪ Available to reflect with them after each session and significant moment in the exploration phase as appropriate. Timings and format of the meetings are to be decided between both parties. Also to agree which person should travel for any face to face meetings. ▪ Discuss anything that might impact the availability e.g. work patterns, leave, extended periods of leave, and other foreseen commitments. ▪ Marking an ending of this phase and discernment of next steps <p>For discoverers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Before the retreat – explain the implications and costs of candidating, help discern order of 	

<p>ministry and whether local/specific context or itinerant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ After the retreat – help them reflect and attend OVAG with the discoverer. Help them make plans for next step. ▪ If asked – to contribute to a candidate’s portfolio. ▪ Remain available to candidate through candidating phase. 	
<p>2. The Form and Structure of Accompaniment</p>	
<p>Please spend some time discussing the shape of meetings noting the different purposes of various meetings (eg, some will be helping identify a course/shadowing/reading experience, others will be helping reflection on that experience).</p>	
<p>You might like to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The place of prayer and type and who leads it on each occasion ▪ The preparation and follow up expected by both parties ▪ Use of materials such as images, objects, written material 	
<p>3. The Boundaries and Expectations of Accompaniment</p>	
<p>Confidentiality – agree that all conversations are confidential unless safeguarding or risks are identified in which case the accompanist would take appropriate action (determined in their training).</p>	
<p>Dual relationships – please name these, consider the impact of them and discuss how they will be managed</p>	
<p>If there are any concerns in the relationship, the relevant officer in the Ministries Team is available to be consulted and to provide support. They do not have a role in any discernment decisions.</p>	
<p>Please explore carefully any reservations of the explorer/discoverer that might undermine trust if left unnamed, especially concerning any dual relationships.</p>	
<p>Signature of explorer/discoverer</p>	
<p>Signature of accompanist</p>	
<p>Date of signing</p>	

The form is kept by both parties and a copy sent to the officer in the Ministries team.	
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6. TRAINING – TO BE HELD ANNUALLY WITH ADDITIONAL HALF DAY EACH YEAR FOR INITIAL TRAINING FOR NEW ACCOMPANISTS – OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER

Content of training

- A. To become fully conversant with the new process and aware of the reasons behind it
- B. Attentive listening and reflective practice – helping others reflect
- C. To develop their own theological reflection so that they can assist explorers/discoverers
- D. Awareness of the material being shared in the regional sessions
- E. Awareness of the content of the retreat
- F. Awareness of the CSC process
- G. Awareness of the nature of the conversation with the MDO (religious order)
- H. Raise awareness of wide range of ministries in the church, including ordained ministries
- I. JDS training to ensure they are sensitive to the variety of people and cultures within the current Methodist church, particularly those who differ from them. Includes awareness of own biases. Aware of hidden diversity – including neurodiversity and specific learning needs.
- J. Aware of shadowing opportunities, and appropriate consultation
- K. Keeping aware of training courses and access arrangements
- L. Keeping aware of suitable books and articles that can assist explorers/discoverers
- M. Maintaining contact with LN and key district/regional staff such as mission enablers as well as Connexional programmes and awareness of these various roles
- N. Self-awareness and skills to notice if an explorer/discoverer becomes either over demanding or over confident. Interpersonal dynamics. (Positive Working Together)
- O. What to do if things go wrong
- P. What to do with safeguarding or risk disclosures
- Q. Develop skills to mentor new accompanists
- R. Commitment to community of practice so that role can develop year on year

7. ROLE DESCRIPTOR - WHAT IS REQUIRED OF THE ACCOMPANIST?

- The accompanist is appointed at the person's point of acceptance into the exploration programme.
- The accompanist meets with their explorer (in person or on zoom) before the first meeting of the cohort and accompanies him or her to the first meeting.
- Thereafter, the accompanist will meet regularly with the explorer (in person or on zoom) throughout the programme. This involves helping the explorer sift material and reflect on journal and experience.
- A key role is towards the end of the programme in helping the person reflect on where their journey seems to be taking them.
- If the Explorer is considering the possibility of ordained ministry, the accompanist will explain and explore the various ordained ministries and the way each can work in practice.
- Where someone indicates that they may feel they have a call to ordained ministry, the two will have a conversation about attendance at the retreat, whether the person is ready or whether there are other things to do or explore before such a move. The accompanist needs to be honest at this point, indicating clearly if the accompanist does not think the person is hearing accurately the sense of call.
- Where someone attends the retreat, the accompanist reflects with the Discoverer on the retreat experience and where that has taken them and helps prepare for the meeting with the Ordained Vocational Advisory Group (OVAG).
- The accompanist attends, with the Discoverer, the meeting with the OVAG and helps them to 'hear' what is said.
- The accompanist is alongside the discoverer to set up plans at the end of this phase.

- The accompanist may be asked by the candidate to contribute to the portfolio.
- In all this, the accompanist is supported by the Connexional Officer responsible.