

Minutes of a meeting of the Methodist Council held on 21-22 October 2021 at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick

- Present:** The President, the Vice-President and 42 voting members as follows:
Mrs Joanne Anderton, Mr Stephen Arnold, Mrs E Jill Baker (Chair), the Revd Karen Beecham, the Revd Paul H Booth, Mr Mark Braithwaite, Mr David Burton, the Revd Dr Joanne Cox-Darling, the Revd Ruth G S Fry, Mr Peter Gregson, the Revd Jeremy H A Hackett, Ms Charlotte Hambly, Ms Bet Holmes, the Revd Dr Jonathan R Hustler, the Revd Ermal Kirby, the Revd Helen R Kirk, Mr Joseph Lambert, Mrs Carolyn Lawrence, the Revd Angela Long, Mr Andrew Lowe, Professor David Matthews, Mrs Val Mayers, Mr Alister McClure, the Revd Leslie M Newton, Mr Keith Norman, Mrs Helen Norton, the Revd Nicholas A Oborski, Dr Hellen Okello, the Revd Malcolm Peacock, Mr Graham Russell, the Revd S Mark Slaney, Ms Sandie Smith, the Revd Rebekah Stennett, the Revd Kate Strange, Mr Doug Swanney, the Revd Timothy A Swindell, Mrs Jenny Taylor, the Revd Graham Thompson, the Revd Alison E Walker, Miss Margaret Webber, Ms Verity Wild, the Revd Michaela A Youngson.
- Apologies:** Mr Anthony Boateng, the Revd Dr Adrian Burdon, the Revd Simon C Edwards, Mr Carl Fairclough, Mr Bala Gnanapragasam, Deacon Karen McBride, Dr Daleep Mukarji, the Revd Michael Parker, the Revd O Mark Street, the Revd Richard J Teal, the Revd Dr Jongikaya Zihle.
- Substitutes:** Deacon Ruth Richey in place of Deacon Karen McBride; the Revd Janet Aspey in place of the Revd Dr Adrian Burdon.
- Observers:** The Revd Clare Downing (URC observer), Mr Daud Irfan (Youth President), Ms Jude Levermore (Head of Mission), the Revd Dr Nicola Price-Tebbutt (Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee), Mr Matthew Tattersall (Director of Finance and Resources), the Revd D Paul Wood (interim Director of the Ministries Team)
- In attendance:** Ms Sharon Hassanali (Events Coordinator), Ms Jillian Moody (Director of Communications), Ms Louise Taylor (Senior Administrator)
- Letters:** The Council sent letters of greeting and concern to Mr Peter Pay and Dr Daleep Mukarji. Letters of support were sent to the Revd Clifford Newman, minister of Belfairs Methodist Church, and the Superintendent and members of the Southend and Leigh Circuit following the death of Sir David Amess MP. A letter was sent congratulating Dr Nicola Brady following her nomination as the General Secretary of the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

21.6.1 Minutes

The Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2021 as a correct record.

21.6.2 Report from the Strategy and Resources Committee [MC/21/68]

The Secretary of the Conference presented MC/21/68.

68/1. The Council received the report.

68/2. The Council adopted the updated Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Action Plan.

68/3. The Council agreed to recommend to the Conference the amendment to SO 304(5) as detailed in paragraph 22 of the report.

68/4. The Council approved the Memorandum of Understanding with Wesley House Cambridge.

The Council noted that the Strategy and Resources Committee is recruiting for new members, and hopes to bring nominations to the next meeting of the Council.

21.6.3 Corporate Risk Register [MC/21/92]

The Connexional Secretary presented MC/21/92.

92/1. The Council approved the Corporate Risk Register.

21.6.4 Report from the Connexional Team [MC/21/69]

The Connexional Secretary presented MC/21/69.

69/1. The Council received the report.

The representative of the Scotland District updated the Council on the preparations for COP26.

21.6.5 Update on work from the Conference [MC/21/70]

The Connexional Secretary presented MC/21/70.

70/1. The Council received the report.

21.6.6 District Reviews [MC/21/71]

The Secretary of the Conference presented MC/21/71.

71/1. The Council received the report.

71/2. The Council approved the terms of reference for the Task Group for Regional and District Structure Planning. The Council appointed the following to serve on the Task Group: Ms Sandie Smith.

[The Task Group now comprises: the Revd Loraine Mellor (Chair), the Revd Rachel Parkinson, the Revd Stephen Lindridge, the Revd Leslie Newton, the Revd Helen Cameron, the Revd Andrew de Ville, the Revd Dr Andrew Lunn, the Revd Nigel Cowgill, Ms Carolyn Hothersall, Mrs Shelagh Morgan, Mr Bala Gnanapragasam, Ms Sandie Smith]

21.6.7 Clarification on Deliverance Ministry Guidance [MC/21/72]

The Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee presented MC/21/72.

72/1. The Council received the report.

72/2. The Council directed that the District Safeguarding Officer is informed in all cases of deliverance ministry.

72/3. The Council directed that the Interim Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry ensures that District Safeguarding Officers, District Chairs and all who are authorised deliverance ministry practitioners are aware of the requirement to inform District Safeguarding Officers in all cases of deliverance ministry.

21.6.8 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

21.6.9 Reinvitation of a tutor at The Queen's Foundation [MC/21/93]

The interim Director of the Ministries Team presented MC/21/93.

93/1. Pursuant to SO 315(2), the Council agreed to recommend the extension of the Revd Dr Paul Nzacahayo's appointment as a Methodist Tutor (half time) for a period of five years from 1 September 2022.

The resolution was passed by the required majority.

21.6.10 Decision-making in relation to the Conference [MC/21/76]

The Secretary of the Conference presented MC/21/76.

76/1. The Council received the report.

- 76/2. The Council agreed the proposals in paragraph 4, adding the Ex-President to the list of members of the Conference Planning Executive as set out in paragraph 4.2, and directed the Secretary to consult the Law and Polity Committee and to arrange for a report with draft Standing Orders to be made to the 2022 Conference.**

21.6.11 Task Group to review the Conference [MC/21/77]

The Assistant Secretary of the Conference presented MC/21/77.

The Council engaged in some discussion of the questions related to the size of the Conference in order to offer a steer to the Task Group.

- 77/1. The Council received the report.**

- 77/2. The Council approved the Terms of Reference for a Task Group, which will report with recommendations to the Council of January 2022. The Council appointed the following members of the Council to serve on the Task Group: the Revd Jeremy H A Hackett, the Revd Malcolm Peacock, Ms Sandie Smith.**

21.6.12 Methodist Council appointments [MC/21/86, MC/21/86A]

- 86/1. The Council appointed the committees, trustees, governors, management bodies and representatives as set out in the report.**

- 86/2. The Council appointed Deacon Ruth Yorke to the Singing the Faith Reference Group with immediate effect.**

- 86A/1. The Council appointed the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity Scrutiny Group as follows: Ms Ruby Beech, Mr Bala Gnanapragasam, Mr John Robinson.**

- 86A/2. The Council appointed the Shadow Justice, Dignity and Solidarity Committee as follows: Workstream conveners: The Revd Ermal B Kirby, the Revd Delyth A Liddell, Ms Irene McKay, the Revd Charity Nzegwu, Dr Val Turner
Nominees of the Methodist Council: the Revd Sonia M Hicks, a vacancy
The chairs and two members for both the Shadow Committee and the permanent Committee recruited through open advertisement:
Co-Chairs: The Revd Charity Nzegwu, the Revd Samuel E McBratney
Members: Mr James Blackhall, a vacancy**
- 86A/3. The Council appointed the Revd Dr Raj Patta to the Cliff College Committee, as a representative of the Ministries Committee.**

21.6.13 Decisions made by the Council since its last meeting [MC/21/87]

- 87/1. The Council received the report.**

- 87/2. The Council ratified the decision made on its behalf in July 2020 to let Chapel Cottage, Kelsale at a peppercorn rent under Model Trust 20(1).**

21.6.14 Matters arising [MC/21/88]

- 88/1. The Council received the report.**

21.6.15 Trust 8669 (the Manse Maintenance Trust) – Bangor and Holyhead Circuit [MC/21/89]

- 89/1. The Council received the report.**

- 89/2. The Council agreed:**

- (a) to relinquish the reversionary gift left to the Mission in Britain Fund under Trust 8669; and**
- (b) to authorise the release of the capital from the Trust for the purpose of upkeep and repairs of the circuit manse in the Bangor and Holyhead Circuit.**

21.6.16 Replacement Project criteria as at 1 September 2021 [MC/21/90]

- 90/1. The Council received the report.**

- 90/2. Pursuant to SO 973(1A), the Council confirmed its adopted criteria for the classification of a project as a replacement project, with effect from 1 September 2021.**

21.6.17 Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity: working towards a fully inclusive Methodist Church [MC/21/91]

91/1. The Council received the report.

21.6.18 Chair of the Council [MC/21/78]

The Secretary of the Conference presented MC/21/78.

78/1. The Council received the report.

78/2. The Council directed that a nomination panel be established with the responsibility of bringing a nomination of the next Chair of the Council to the Council in April 2022. The Council appointed the following to the panel: the Revd Dr Joanne H Cox-Darling, the Revd Ruth M Gee, Ms Charlotte Hambly.

21.6.19 Pension Scheme Actuarial Valuation [MC/21/79, MC/21/79A]

The Director of Finance and Resources presented MC/21/79 and the supplementary paper MC/21/79A. The Council noted that the resolutions contained within paper MC/21/79A replaced those previously circulated in MC/21/79.

79/1. The Council received the report.

79/2. The Council noted the key assumptions used in the preparation of the pension valuation and approved the deficit contributions as set out in table 2 or as subsequently varied in line with the parameters in table 3. This includes contribution rates payable by both ministers (9.3%) and circuits (26.9%) remaining fixed for a period of at least one year and that the consequent shortfall in funding (c£1.1m per annum) is covered by the Pension Reserve Fund.

79/3. The Council approved an offer of Contingent Assets to the Trustee of the Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme (MMPS) and the Pension and Assurance Scheme for Lay Employees of the Methodist Church (PASLEMC) including, if approved by the relevant managing trustee body, the placing of a legal charge on:

(a) the Wesley Hotel Euston and/or

(b) the North Bank Estate and/or

(c) the Connexional Manses.

The Council noted that final approval of these charges is the responsibility of the relevant managing trustee body for each of the properties under charity law and will only be given following relevant legal advice and with the oversight of the Strategy and Resources Committee.

79/4. The Council approved the Remedy Payment mechanism. This includes changes to the Pension Reserve Fund, providing negative pledges covering its use and the creation of sub-funds (requiring Pension Trustee approval for payments) that will hold amounts to cover the deficit contributions. This also includes agreeing a long-term funding objective of Gilts plus 0.5% for MMPS (in 15 years) and PASLEMC (in 10 years).

79/5. The Council delegated to the Strategy and Resources Committee the final approval of all the necessary agreements with the Pension Trustees in line with the principles and parameters as laid out in this paper having given due regard to the legal and pensions advice from the external advisers. It further delegated to two members of the Council the authority to sign the relevant documentation to bring these resolutions into effect.

79/6. The Council approved the establishment of a project funded from the Pension Reserve Fund to review the future of the Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme.

21.6.20 Safeguarding Policy Updates [MC/21/80]

The Secretary of the Conference presented MC/21/80.

80/1. The Council received the report.

80/2. The Council adopted the standards and criteria in respect of District Safeguarding Groups.

80/3. The Council approved the revised safer recruitment policy.

80/4. The Council approved the addition of the new anti-bullying policy to the Safeguarding Policy.

21.6.21 Resources relating to *The Theology of Safeguarding* [MC/21/81]

The Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee presented MC/21/81.

81/1. The Council received the report.

81/2. The Council supported the recommendations in paragraphs 4 and 5 of this report.

81/3. The Council directed the Ministries Committee, in consultation with the Faith and Order Committee, to consider how the Worship: Leading and Preaching course might need to be developed to take account of the contents of the Theology of Safeguarding report.

21.6.22 The Council: format of meetings and ways of working [MC/21/73]

The Secretary of the Conference presented MC/21/73, which the Council considered in group discussions.

73/1. The Council received the report.

73/2. The Council approved the format of meetings as set out in paragraph 1.2, and delegated to the Chair of the Council the authority to determine in what format the Council meets each time.

73/3. The Council approved the outline protocols for decision-making as set out in paragraph 4.

21.6.23 Impact Assessment [MC/21/74]

The Council considered this paper in group discussions. A revised paper will be presented in January 2022.

74/1. The Council received the report.

21.6.24 Looking to the Future [MC/21/75]

The Secretary of the Conference presented MC/21/75, which the Council considered in group discussions. The Council considered some questions around the support of the Vice-President but decided not to make any resolution on the subject.

75/1. The Council received the report.

75/2. The Council agreed to establish a task group comprising the Connexional Secretary, the Director of Finance and Resources and several members of the Council to scope the proposal to rethink the funding of stipends in further detail. The Council appointed the following to serve on the task group: the Revd Ruth G S Fry, Mrs Val Mayers, The Revd Graham Thompson, Miss Margaret Webber.

21.6.25 Model Trust 14(2A) policy [MC/21/82]

The Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice presented MC/21/82.

82/1. The Council received the report.

82/2. The Council appointed Mr Andrew Lowe, the Revd Nicholas A Oborski and Mrs Jenny Taylor to assist the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice with formulating a draft Model Trust 14(2A) policy, in conjunction with representatives of the Faith and Order Committee and Law and Polity Committee as necessary.

21.6.26 Leasing at an undervalue: Afghan refugees [MC/21/83]

The Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice presented MC/21/83.

83/1. The Council received the report.

83/2. The Council agreed that Managing Trustees of Local Church, Circuit and District Model Trust property may grant assured shorthold tenancy agreements of residential Model

Trust property at below the market rent where the properties are to be occupied under the “Afghan Citizens’ Resettlement Scheme”, without the need for the consent of the Council under Model Trust 20 in each individual case.

21.6.27 Action for Hope – A Path to Net Zero Carbon Emissions for the Methodist Church [MC/21/84]

The Head of Mission presented MC/21/84.

84/1. The Council received the report.

84/2. The Council approved the approach to developing a Methodist Faith Plan, as outlined in the body of the report.

21.6.28 Appeals Processes [MC/21/85]

The interim Director of the Ministries Team presented MC/21/85.

85/1. The Council received the report.

85/2. The Council directed that a task group be established as in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the report.

21.6.29 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE