

Report from the Connexional Team

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Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	To Note

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To provide the Council with an update on work in the Connexional Team that relates to the Methodist Council Objectives.
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1. This report provides the Council with an update on work in the Connexional Team that relates to the Methodist Council Objectives since the last report in October 2021.

Proclaiming the Gospel through worship/ The ministry of the whole people of God in the life of the World

2. The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) produced Advent Resources including a candle lighting liturgy and a mini-series of the podcast Politics in the Pulpit reflecting on the gospel readings for Advent. The liturgy has been promoted through the JPIT newsletter and by releasing a video of the prayers each week of Advent across JPIT social media.
3. The 2021/2022 Methodist Prayer Handbook, *A Place for All*, has sold nearly 22,000 copies in total to date in standard, lectern/large print and e-book formats. Commissioning of the next Methodist Prayer Handbook for 2022/2023 is underway, with contributions being solicited from across the Connexion and around the world. This year, more 'creative' contributions are also being sought: more poetic or liturgical prayers to increase the Handbook's theological richness. This edition will overtly link with the proposed theme for the President and Vice-President Designates' year of office, and will also include their summary details and prayer points – in order for the Handbook to support them more directly in their presidency of the Conference (and deliberately avoiding the need for additional and separate postcards).
4. We have started a project to offer the Methodist Worship Book in a variety of electronic forms to facilitate changing ways of worshipping: PowerPoint, Word, PDF, printed booklets of related groups of services, and e-book. The Holy Communion services will be released in January 2022.
5. A wide-ranging recruitment process has renewed the *Singing the Faith* Reference Group with a diverse membership of new advocates for the book and website. A complex piece of work is underway to establish and extend the Methodist Church in Britain's (MCB) rights to publish the content of *Singing the Faith* in a variety of alternative electronic formats. The possibilities of extended licensing are also being explored and how to be able to advise users who approach us, how to get copyright permission far more easily, where MCB cannot grant it.
6. The Communications Team has continued to engage with media outlets and we have secured interviews and appearances on many high profile outlets. Over the past 6 months we have provided Methodist guests on BBC Radio 4's Today programme and the Sunday programme, Sunday Morning Live on BBC One, national press including The Times, Guardian and Daily Mail, numerous BBC local radio stations, Premier Radio, UCB, GB TV News. The Methodist Podcast interviews are regularly used on Premier Radio, including our Remembrance 2021 programme which they ran in its entirety. Building on the success of our Christmas 2020 and Easter 2021 CDs

we produced a Christmas service on a CD for 2021 with the 20,000 copies being snapped up within the first two weeks.

7. *The Leadership Year* consists of three residential weekends and online gatherings and has a focus of developing Christian characteristics of leadership. It is about gathering, supporting and developing Methodist Young Adult Leaders, through training, worship, reflection and community. This year, there are thirteen participants aged 18-30, including seven One Programme Participants, four Cliff Year Interns, the Youth President, a Cliff student and two JPIT Interns. This programme will be expanding in 2022/2023 to include a wider cohort from across the connexion. This year, there are fourteen Youth Representatives aged 16-23, including three Council Reps, three Conference Reps, two Ecumenical Reps, two Global Church Reps, three Agents of Change Reps and a Digital Rep.
8. Work is ongoing to create a new virtual learning training pathway for those in children, youth and family ministry, in partnership with Youthscape and the Children's Ministry Network. The training pathway will be available via the virtual learning platform, Theology X. The module of youth ministry will be launched in spring 2022, with modules on family and intergenerational ministry, and children's ministry, following in autumn 2022. The training pathway will involve a combination of self-led and facilitated training opportunities, focusing on skills, leadership and other subjects relevant to developing ministry with children, young people and families.
9. Work is ongoing to shape a children, youth and family ministries research project to be launched in December 2021. The focus will be on understanding the provision of children, youth and family ministry is across the Connexion, on both Sundays and midweek. This will include shape, style and numbers, volunteering, scope of projects and activities, and variety of provision. The research will also explore areas of growth and change in ministry in local churches, circuits and districts. This will be supplemented by a review of the training, resourcing and supporting of those delivering and facilitating ministry with children, young people and families. This research will be used to shape MCB's approach to resourcing and supporting growth.

A Church for all people/ The Inclusive Church

10. The Communications team has been working closely with the Inclusive Church Implementation Officer and the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Adviser to support with communicating the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity strategy. We are producing a film to be released in the new year which sets out the aims of the strategy and have worked on an Inclusive Language guide. We are currently working towards LGBTQ+ History Month in February and will also be focusing on EDI resources and work in March.
11. Work on the Reconciliation and Mediation Team (RMT) project continues to develop. The RMT practitioners were commissioned at the recent Place for Hope development sessions. Our practitioners have been warmly welcomed into the existing Place for Hope practitioner group. There have been a number of referrals that have come through from the three learning network pilot regions and these are being followed up by Place for Hope and the practitioner team.
12. In November the Safeguarding Team hosted a webinar on making Dementia Friendly Churches which was attended by more than 220 people across the church who were presented with eight speakers covering subjects from the theology of personhood to practical steps churches can take in making themselves more accessible and accommodating of people with dementia. The feedback to this event has been extremely positive and is part of a drive to make fuller use of our safeguarding training resources which are not just confined to safe recruitment and DBS checking. As the church membership gets older the need for greater awareness and action around supporting vulnerable adults in a range of ways becomes more important.

13. 3Generate, the Methodist Children and Youth Assembly, took place at the end of October. One of the focus areas this year was on communication and building confidence, with Zoom gatherings answering questions and offering support to leaders and churches. 750 children attended the Assembly from 21 Methodist districts, together with 250 Leaders. 180 volunteers and staff formed into a “delivery team” to look after venues, act as stewards, provide additional needs support, look after the accommodation village both during the day and overnight, together with registration, reception and a roving youth team. There was great diversity represented at the event in terms of age, ethnicity and ability. 4-7 year olds were able to attend 3Generate for the first time (this was run as a pilot this year).
14. Defining the ‘brand’ for Church resources from the Connexional Team has included work on both ‘Tone of Voice’ and ‘Visual Identity’. The ‘Tone of Voice’ guidance includes illustrations of why, as Christians presenting our faith through the Methodist lens, we want to be heard as open, confident, empowering and challenging. Our Wesleyan heritage is reflected in these examples, alongside female and Black theologians’ voices. In addition, the Communications team, Publishing Services, and the EDI team have worked on extensive additional ‘Inclusive Language’ guidance for what being ‘open’ sounds like: to be genuinely welcoming and inclusive. Discussions are ongoing about how to widen access to resources through translation for those with different abilities, as well as those whose first language is not English. More resources will be made available in plain text online, as well as PDF, so as to be more accessible, through their adaptation software, for people with various visual impairments/language needs.
15. From 25 September – 30 October, six works from the Methodist Modern Art Collection were included among 40 in an exhibition at Chester Cathedral “to challenge our perceptions as to how Jesus Christ and other people of faith are depicted by people of different ethnicity, race and colour”: www.chestercathedral.com/event/global-images-of-christ-challenging-perceptions/2021-10-10/
16. The Property and Heritage teams and the committees they support are engaged in developing guidance for churches on how to respond to ‘contested heritage’, which is being considered as critically including, but wider than, issues of race and possible past engagement with the transatlantic trade in enslaved people. Dr Clive Norris is continuing his research into the possibility of benefit to the Church from transatlantic slavery and will report on his findings early in 2022, in order to feed into the work related to responding to the memorial to the 2021 Methodist Conference on reparations.

God’s Church in God’s world/ Striving for Justice and Peace

17. In November the Safeguarding Team hosted a second webinar on Domestic Abuse which was attended by more than 100 people across the church. Another high quality programme of speakers was assembled with powerful presentations from a female and male survivor of domestic abuse. Feedback was again very positive and has encouraged the Safeguarding team to continue to develop our understanding of this area of work with many partners across the church in order to demonstrate how the Methodist Church is becoming a leader in seeking justice for those who have been abused and supporting victims and survivors through the process.
18. The *Walking With Micah* project has been preparing to support a wide-ranging conversation about what a just world looks like and what it means to be a justice seeking church. Tools to encourage conversations, including workshop plans, craftivist sessions, intergenerational resources and worship resources, will be available from the beginning of February. People will be encouraged to send in responses via postcard or e-survey. The conversations will run from

February to June. At the same time, the project is beginning to bring together learning from Methodist theology, heritage, ecumenical relations and wider Methodist family, as well as listening to people who have experience of injustice. More details, conversation tools and ways of responding can be found at www.methodist.org.uk/walking-with-micah.

19. Our Senior Media Officer spent three days in Glasgow to support the local team there with work around COP26. We were able to use photos and audio she gathered which were very popular on our social media channels and told the story of the work that was being done locally in conjunction with Connexional Team members.
20. Whilst there is much concern about the limited nature of the achievements made at COP itself, the global Methodist COP26 team has been hugely successful and could be a model of working in partnership with other Methodists around the world as we engage in global mission in the 21st Century. One of the two British COP26 and all of the four global COP26 Workers have been financed from the World Mission Fund. The project connected networks of workers and volunteers from a multiplicity of countries, engaging collaboratively and sharing knowledge. The project used technology to minimise air travel and paved the way for a very powerful face-to-face encounter and work together in Glasgow. The project reflected the holistic nature of MCB's mission, and nurtures and encourages future collaborative leaders. This was a team of equals working together, focused on a key global mission issue, drawing on and disseminating content from across the globe, with input from various regional perspectives. The team was guided by a steering group, and line managers drawn from the global Methodist family; it was actively supported by the World Methodist Council.
21. Over 1800 Methodists signed the national declaration prepared by the UK COP26 workers, it was presented to Mr Alok Sharma before the conference. The Climate Justice for All (CJ4A) team met face to face for the first time in Glasgow and were supported throughout their time at COP. Working in conjunction with Woodlands Methodist Church in Glasgow the team held meetings and streamed 12 hours of worship material, videos and live content. Many of the CJ4A team were accredited and therefore, able to spend time in the Blue Zone at COP networking and speaking. The team and staff members produced daily videos to keep people informed of developments at COP. After the conference a blog and full briefing were prepared to inform on how the 'Glasgow Pact' agreements would affect the environment.
22. As (at the time of writing) the Nationalities and Borders Bill continues through Parliament, JPIT prepared and released resources to enable people to engage with the bill and campaign for a fairer and more compassionate asylum system. In October JPIT worked with local activists in Manchester to organise a prayer vigil outside the Conservative Party Conference. JPIT has also continued to work in partnership with others to campaign against the reduction in Universal Credit.
23. Alongside the continued publication of the daily 'Stay & Pray' posts, the monthly newsletter, regular blogs and the Faith in Politics and Politics in the Pulpit Podcasts JPIT have begun to pilot a new short form podcast '10 Minutes On' responding to current political issues.
24. Preparations are underway for the JPIT annual conference on June 11th 2022, the theme is 'Rediscovering hope and seeking justice: From the Ground Up'. The conference will be hybrid with delegates joining in person in London as well as online to explore what justice looks like from the grassroots level.
25. The Connexional Team have signed up to a cycle to work scheme via CycleScheme (www.cyclescheme.co.uk) to encourage staff to commute via bicycle. CycleScheme enables staff to save 25-39% of the cost of a new bike & accessories whilst also spreading the cost. This

complements recent work undertaken to reduce the carbon emissions of MCB. Plans are underway for the CycleScheme to be offered to ministers next year and further updates to the Council will follow.

26. Catering at Methodist Church House has recently been changed – milk is delivered in glass bottles and all catering will now be meat-free. This will help to reduce single-use plastics and the carbon emissions of MCB. For more on this subject, see the Action for Hope interim report which is also before the Council.

Evangelism / God For All

27. The Digital Training Officer took up their role in November and is already working closely with the Evangelism and Growth, Communications and Learning Network teams as the work of training in digital communications is developed. The DTO is working with the Director of Regional Learning and Development and Director of Learning for Ministry in exploring how TheologyX will be developed further as our online learning platform.
28. The Communications team and Publishing Services worked collaboratively to launch a series of resources for Christmas based on Luke 2:10, to encourage churches to share, in a simple way, the angel's enduring message of the 'great joy' in Christ's birth; to show continuing concern and solidarity with their neighbours after another difficult year. There was a complementary window display at Methodist Church House. All the resources are illustrated with a work, Nativity, by Chinese artist, He Qi: Advent and Christmas 2021 (methodist.org.uk). These resources were accompanied by weekly, contemporary online reflections developed by the Communications team.
29. Having completed the extensive programme of conservation, reframing and re-casing of the Methodist Modern Art Collection supported by the Strategy & Resources Committee (SRC) in 2018, the Collection Management Committee relaunched the Collection in collaboration with Coventry & Nuneaton Circuit on 3 September 2021 with the Coventry Art Trail (www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/reflecting-on-faith/the-methodist-modern-art-collection/coventry-art-trail) in four Methodist churches and Coventry Cathedral as part of Coventry's year as UK City of Culture: *Stories of Change – Faith, Hope and Love*. While physical visitor numbers were undoubtedly impacted by the continuing reticence of people to go out to events in the aftermath of the pandemic, the churches mounted a remarkably successful programme of outreach responding to the works that included art classes, use in worship, collaborative community creative projects, talks and a flower festival. Due to the timing and closeness to Birmingham, the Management Committee were delighted to be able to support a request from the organisers to take a number of works from Coventry to the NEC to engage participants of all ages at 3Generate and facilitate them to encounter and discuss God, faith and mission, through art. In order to critique their new ways of working and the presentation of the Art Trail objectively, the Management Committee have asked for help with an independent review by a member of SRC.
30. The Evangelism and Growth team has been sharing in dialogue with circuits about how they are holding together: (1) the need for intentional, reflective rest as they continue to undergo the pandemic; (2) the desire to discern what to lay down for a season or indefinitely in order to centre on the most important things in ministry and mission; and (3) the Gospel call to be in authentic relationship with their local communities, especially religiously unaffiliated people and those living at the economic margins. The Evangelism and Growth Team offers every circuit such a conversation and reflection on God for All, with 20% of circuits already booked in. For more information you can email evangelism@methodistchurch.org.uk.

Centred in God

31. The new Methodist Way of Life (MWOL) Implementation and Strategy Group has taken a strategic look at opportunities to promote and embed MWOL throughout the Connexion. The group aims to embed MWOL not simply as a series of resources, but as a framework for a missional, evangelistic discipleship culture, including congregational discipleship pathways and small groups to support this framework. This has included gathering church leaders for digital roundtable discussions; launching a new intergenerational resource and associated webinar with Evangelism and Growth, Children Youth and Families, and the Learning Network; a project between Evangelism and Growth and Ministries Team to support churches becoming classes; and a Methodist Covenant online retreat.
32. Working with the Learning Network, proposals are underway for a new course/experience to equip church leaders to help their church members to pray (individually and corporately). An experiential prayer day is also being planned for 2022, hopefully in partnership with 24-7 Prayer.
33. Initial plans have been made for a project to explore ways to resource and encourage theological literacy and reflection at the grassroots level. This will be a project involving Evangelism and Growth, Faith and Order, Learning Network, Children Youth and Families, and Ministries, and will involve partners from the Queen's Foundation, Cliff College and the Susanna Wesley Foundation. A consultation is anticipated in 2022.
34. Bible Month in 2022 will focus on Isaiah. The planning group (Evangelism and Growth, Learning Network, Ministries), in partnership with The Leaders of Worship and Preachers Trust (LWPT), has now completed the design of the printed resource. Plans have been made for training events and promotional activities throughout 2022 to move towards a sense of a connexional-wide engagement with this text. Plans for the 2023 campaign (Revelation) are underway.
35. Further information on work towards *Centred in God* is available at www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/evangelism-growth/discipleship-pathways-travelling-together.

Everyone An Evangelist

36. The Evangelism for Leaders course continues to attract a steady sign up of lay and ordained leaders wishing to model, prioritise and enable evangelism in their contexts and is scheduled regularly throughout the year.
37. In September 2021, the new Community of Evangelists launched; they have now met online twice for group coaching and for worship as well as on-site at a retreat centre for a two-day residential. The Community is small but diverse – made up of lay and ordained people – and is an important source of spiritual and practical support and fellowship for Methodists called and gifted as evangelists.
38. The Everyone an Evangelist course – a tool to equip groups from local churches and circuits in evangelism - has been in design and production this autumn, ready to launch to the Church in January 2022.
39. The Evangelism and Growth team has also been working closely with ecumenical partners to provide resourcing for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee as an opportunity for community outreach and faith sharing and these resources will be released in early 2022 (www.theplatinumjubilee.com).

40. The new Rural Mission and Ministry Officer helped to develop and delivered the new 3-day Rural Ministry Course, ecumenical training for those new to rural life & mission in partnership with Arthur Rank Centre, focusing on rural mission and evangelism. This will be expanding in 2022 to include regional venues and an online option. For more see: www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk/ruralministrycourse.
41. Further information towards *Everyone an Evangelist* is available at: www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/evangelism-growth/practise-evangelism/equipped-for-evangelism.

Transformational Leadership

42. The Transformational Leadership Learning Community (TLLC) year started with 20 teams; six returning for a second year, and 14 new teams. 16 of these teams completed the year with four withdrawing due to various local factors not related to the Learning Community. Feedback about the TLLC from both participants and those who coach them has been positive, with teams making progress in their action planning.
43. A new Officer for Evangelism and Leadership in the Ministries Team (and tutor at the Queen's Foundation) focuses on the rooting of transformational leadership, oversight and encouragement of New Places for New People (NPNP), and pioneering/planting as a key part of the core Mission and Evangelism module for all ministers in initial formation, and also the delivery of an MA module in Transformative Christian Leadership.
44. Further work towards *Transformational Leadership* is available at www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/evangelism-growth/lead-churches-into-growth/develop-transformational-leadership/transformational-leadership-learning-community.

New Places for New People (NPNP)

45. Six district NPNP projects have been approved by the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) and are moving towards launch; the remaining four from the first tranche (2020/21) are still in active consultation and discernment. Summaries of the emerging projects can be found at www.methodist.org.uk/npnpdistrictprojects. The Evangelism and Growth team is currently accompanying 13 districts in the second tranche (2021/2022), with eight districts in the third tranche (2022/2023). See the district tranche list here: www.methodist.org.uk/npnptranches.
46. A suite of events, trainings and gatherings to support pioneer development is planned for 2022, including NPNP Hubs (exploration events for those discerning a call to pioneer), a pioneering short course, and a Church Planting Intensive.
47. A quarterly NPNP update is now produced through the Connexional NPNP Guiding team in order to promote and nurture the NPNP movement across the Church.
48. A Project Officer (for Funding Allocation and Distribution) was appointed to the Mission team in August 2021 to design, develop, and oversee the process which provides funding support to districts and circuits starting NPNP.

Church at the Margins (CaM)

49. The first of ten online 2022 regional CaM gatherings has been held in the Yorkshire Plus region with the aim of sharing the vision and values of CaM and encouraging networks/communities of practice within urban, rural, and coastal contexts. For more see: www.methodist.org.uk/cam-resources.

50. *Beginning a Church at the Margins*, a three-session interactive online course this Spring, can now be booked into www.methodist.org.uk/cam-training for those planning to start communities of new Christians amongst and led by people experiencing poverty.

51. A Social Justice and Evangelism webinar series has launched, with the first webinar hosted by the Revd Sonia Hicks in collaboration with JPIT (Paul Morrison) and Evangelism and Growth (Eunice Attwood).

Every Church a Growing Church

52. A new document by the Evangelism and Growth team, *Rooted and New: Exploring a Mixed Ecology of New Places for New People*, presents an overview of big ideas and questions about pioneering, mission with unaffiliated people, leadership, and the vision of existing churches/circuits committed to starting new Christian communities. The reflection and guidance for churches and leaders who want to listen well in their contexts comes from a season of E&G-facilitated small group conversations and 1-1 interviews with more than sixty leaders in the Methodist Church – lay and ordained people, 3Gen reps, young adults, district missionaries and district chairs, hyperlocal practitioners and regional coordinators, people diverse in gender, ethnicity, sexuality, mission context, and theology.

53. An updated and expanded version of the interactive Our Church's Future Story resource has recently been published. It comprises stand-alone, user-friendly and tactile cards effective for group work around mission planning and discerning God's call for a church or circuit. It supports established churches through their mission planning process; supports discerning, writing and putting into practice a really useful mission plan; and includes new material specifically designed for producing a circuit mission plan. The new resource integrates mission planning guidance with contemporary questions around digital missional engagement; intergenerational community; EDI/JDS; missional property considerations; and also encourages churches and circuits to reflect on lessons learned during the pandemic.

Digital Evangelism

54. A Director of Digital Engagement has been recruited to work in the Communications team and closely with the Evangelism and Growth team to develop strategies to encourage and equip the Methodist to explore, deepen, and diversify digital engagement in mission and ministry, including a theologically coherent vision of digital presence and digital community, and strategic planning of digital campaigns with a priority on evangelism.

55. A pilot series of Hope and Anchor, an online spirituality chat show, launched in September 2021 seeking to experiment digitally, build community, and model and centre faith conversations amongst Methodists and unaffiliated people alike. The pilot series had a weekly viewership of around 200 people; a second series for spring 2022 is being considered.

Young Evangelists and Leaders

56. In September 2021, a new appointment was made to the role of Young Evangelism Officer – a shared post with Cliff College. Richard Oppong-Boateng who was appointed to the role has spent this quarter building relationships and strategy preparing a 2022 offer of retreats and events for children, young people and youth workers, a Young Evangelists Community, encouragement for the local church in praying for young people and social media content to encourage and equip young evangelists.

Resources for the Church: the use of God's gifts (including Oversight and Leadership)

57. The Learning Network is looking at a number of joined up areas of work that can be offered across the Connexion so as to make the most effective use of experience and resources working cross-regionally. These areas include work on:
- Line Management Training – for all those with line management responsibilities (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/methodist-learning-network-33599752323>)
 - Sessions for Supervisees within the Supervision policy. These sessions are intended to enable supervisees to understand and make the most of their supervision. (<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:33ed3afa-e2ce-4e50-af85-1cfefd6d8c9a>)
 - Continued professional development (CPD) in Supervision. The Ministries team, Learning Network and others involved in the Supervision training programme have worked together on producing eight core modules for Supervision CPD and the plan for delivering these across the Connexion for all Supervisors is now being planned.
 - Vocations exploration – working with the Ministries team to offer *Encounter* as a Methodist exploration of discipleship and vocation (<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/vocations/discerning-vocation/connexional-opportunities/encounter>)
 - Candidating Support
 - Bible Month
 - Positive Working Together (<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/guidance-for-churches/introducing-positive-working-together/training-in-positive-working-together>)
58. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). The cohort of 11 people have now completed their initial MHFA England training and are planning a number of initial training events as the final part of their accreditation. We will be expanding the offering of course as the year progresses.
59. The Annual Report and Accounts were completed ahead of schedule and with only the most minor of comments from the External Auditors. For the first time this year, the document is not being published professionally, but has retained all the necessary statutory information.
60. Intensive negotiations with the Pension Trustees continued, resulting in the signing of the triennial valuation for the Pension and Assurance Scheme for Lay Employees of the Methodist Church and agreeing the principles of the valuation of the Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme. Considerable work was also undertaken responding to requests for information from churches and circuits as they considered their responses to the Conference appeal for voluntary contributions to the Pension Reserve Fund.
61. The implementation of the new Connexional database has commenced with workshops delivered by the software provider and engagement with a small core group of staff from across the Connexional Team. This phase of the project will last until the summer. In addition, a cyber-security company has been appointed to support the IT team in enhancing the security of our systems. A full review will be undertaken with recommendations expected later in 2022.
62. The facilities and front of house team continued to ensure Methodist Church House was fit for purpose as both a work place and a meeting place. Interim measures were put in place following the failure of the heating system and the building was made safe as the Team once again returned to a work from home policy.
63. The new World Mission Fund (WMF) Grants Committee is making decisions on Solidarity Grants made to Partners from the WMF. The new Committee has met to agree a number of Essential Assistance Grants to help the more vulnerable of our Partners over the coming months avoid

organisational crises due to lack of funding: This is to tide such partners over as the Partnership Co-ordinators work with them on proposals for Capacity-building Grants to be released from the WMF during 2022-24. All Partners receiving grants from the WMF are required to sign the International Safeguarding Principles as drafted with our Partners and signed and agreed by Council. Partners are also asked to provide any Safeguarding/Child Protection policies that they might have. The Global Relationships (GR) team is working closely with the Safeguarding team in the light of the responses received and as our Partners share their best practices and any concerns that they might have in their work.

64. The Heritage team's work has been dominated by preparations to leave Methodist Church House. The MMS Archive Project welcomed a new, full-time temporary archivist into the team in September. Project lead, Annaig Boyer, and Anthony will reach another milestone for their work around Christmas, when the second tranche of MMS records (c.200 boxes) are planned to be relocated to the SOAS Library. The Methodist Heritage Officer has made a detailed inventory of the many artefacts, artworks, image collections, and historic books throughout Methodist Church House, and is working with the Council's Liaison Officer for Historic Objects, and the Heritage Committee's Artefacts Group (of Methodist collections officers from our museums and institutions around the Connexion) to propose which should be retained for the Connexional Team's new offices and which relocated and to where in the move, always with the aim of the greatest possible use for mission for each item. In this, the Heritage Committee is following the Collection Management policy and guidance approved by the Council in 2014 www.methodistheritage.org.uk/artefacts-policy.htm and seeking to demonstrate best practice for chapels facing similar hard choices in the face of closure.
65. The Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice (COLCP) continues to advise the Council and Connexional Team on a wide range of legal issues, offering guidance to managing trustees around the Connexion on matters of charity registration, interpretation of Standing Orders and same-sex marriage registration, working alongside TMCP. The COLCP also convenes the Law and Polity Committee which has met twice so far this connexional year to consider matters referred to the Committee and any proposed amendments to Standing Orders, particularly arising from the Oversight and Trusteeship project.
66. The Conference Office continues to support the work directed by the Conference in respect of aspects of the Oversight and Trusteeship of the Church. Working groups have been appointed to consider each of the strands of the work which the 2021 Conference directed, overseen by a Steering Group. The Council will receive an update on this work for its information.

Responding to the Gospel in partnership

67. The Learning Network in partnership with Methodist Homes (MHA) ran a successful webinar in October entitled 'After the Storm – Coping with Covid-19, Grief and Loss'. It is hoped that the success of the webinar might lead to additional opportunities for collaborative work in the future.
68. The Safeguarding Team has begun a series of virtual safeguarding training sessions with the Methodist Church in Ghana which follow on from a successful programme delivered to the Methodist Church in Peru earlier this year. This is enabling us to also learn about the application of safeguarding practice in other contexts and contributing to a resource library that we are establishing so that we are able to provide more tailored programmes for different cultures and countries.
69. Three new Mission Partners have taken up placements since September 1st, and four more are due to take up placement early in 2022.

70. Jointly with the Methodist Church in Ireland, we are hosting conversations with all our Partners on the future of global mission, analysing the various contexts in which we engage in mission, identifying challenges and opportunities, and exploring how we can most-effectively support each other as global Partners engaged in mission. The conversations are being facilitated by one of our Partner Organisations, Regional Ecumenical Advisory and Service Centre, CREAS. CREAS is an ecumenical multidisciplinary network of professionals working in Latin America and the Caribbean with the mission of strengthening the capacities of the ecumenical movement for the promotion of dignity, economic, social and gender justice, and the care of our Common Home. CREAS facilitates Mission Round Tables with Methodist Churches in South America and their partner churches globally. An initial online meeting with the Heads of MCB and Methodist Church Ireland's Partner Churches and Organisations has taken place, and now the Round-table and supporting working groups have been established. It is hoped that the results of these discussions and recommendations for future mutual support and co-operation will be presented to the Global Relationships Committee in late spring/early summer 2022.
71. The World Mission Fund continues to be used to support Partners as they respond to the continuing impacts of COVID-19, conflict and natural disasters.
72. The Global Relationships team continue to offer support in the twinning of districts with a European and a non-European Partner. A recent twinning relationship was agreed between the East Anglia District and the Harare West District of Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. A pilot to support districts in joint Bible Studies with a Twinning Partner is also being explored.
73. Partnerships were strengthened in the build up to COP26. The Connexional Team worked with Climate Sunday (an ecumenical coalition) and with Make COP Count (a multi-faith partnership) to engage churches in grassroots climate action. The Climate Justice for All project was a highly successful partnership between Global Relations, JPIT, All We Can, and World Church Partners.
74. The work of the Marketing Executive is being refocused away from marketing publications to concentrate on marketing the Connexional Funds. She is developing a work plan initially with Global Relationships colleagues to encourage support for the World Mission Fund by telling the stories of collaboration with our Partners and of the people who are helped by the allocation of funding.

In closing

75. As always the Council is invited to engage with the Team on any areas it has concerns about through the Connexional Secretary at any time.

*****RESOLUTION**

6/1. The Council receives the report.