

Ministries Committee

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 changes to Standing Order 745(4)(b) as laid out in report.</p> <p>41/3. The Council recommends to the Conference a revision of the phrase which appears at the end of obituaries <i>"in the xxx year of their ministry"</i> to read <i>"in the xx year of their presbyteral or diaconal ministry."</i></p> <p>41/4. The Council recommends to the Conference that Standing Order 153 be revised as laid out in report.</p> <p>41/5. The Council recommends to the Conference that Standing Order 732 be revised as laid out in report.</p> <p>41/6. The Council directs that a review group be set up to consider issues around Authorised to Serve status for transferring ministers and that a full review of Standing Order 732 becomes part of the remit of the group.</p> <p>41/7. The Council directs that the Ministers of Other Conferences and Churches Oversight Committee be disbanded.</p> <p>41/8. The Council commends the report and its recommendations to the Conference.</p>

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To bring the Methodist Council up to date with the work of the Ministries Committee.
Main Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Learning Institutions • New Places for New People - reports on developments in Fresh Expressions and Pioneer Ministry. • Lay Ministries • Matters relating to Ordained Ministries

INTRODUCTION

1. The Ministries Committee is accountable through the Methodist Council to the Conference for:

Standing Order 32A1(2)

- (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 2019 Conference on 18 September, 8-9 February (24 hours at Cliff College) and will have a further meeting on 9 June.

2. The Committee reports on its work in the following sections.
 - The Learning Institutions and Continuing Development in Ministry (CDIM).
 - New Places for New People - reports on developments in Fresh Expressions and Pioneer Ministry
 - Lay Ministries
 - Matters relating to Ordained Ministries

THE LEARNING INSTITUTIONS AND CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT IN MINISTRY (CDIM)

3. One of the Ministries Committee's responsibilities is to report on the relationship with The Queen's Foundation and Cliff College. The Committee had reviewed a draft partnership agreement with the Queen's Foundation which was given final approval by the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) in September. The Committee received annual reports from the two institutions in September which were highly favourable.
4. **Cliff College** - The vision of Cliff College is to be a beacon of excellence for training in mission and evangelism, and serves the Church in the UK and internationally, building on its close relationship with the Methodist Church in Britain. The college's work aids and enables the wider mission of the Church 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
 - supporting the Connexional Team in the delivery of Worship: Learning & Preaching, and in providing a meeting place for groups and committees
 - supporting the local church through short courses, providing learning for those in ministry roles
 - the 'Cliff Local' programme, which offers hospitality and opportunities for learning for those in ministry in circuits around the Connexion.
5. Despite the current challenges for smaller institutions in Higher Education, Cliff has gained a good outcome from its most recent QAA inspection. It enjoys a strong relationship with the University of Manchester and continues to provide a suite of accredited degree programmes at every level, in addition to its work in and emphasis on non-accredited courses for those in current ministry contexts. It has begun to celebrate its own faculty's specialisms, for instance in establishing new centres with a focus on pneumatology, and gender. In the last year, there has been a particular focus on expanding the range of the college's engagement overseas in capacity-building and theological training, particularly within the global Methodist family. The TheologyX online learning platform is an attractive and user-friendly resource at the cutting edge of such technology, and has been enthusiastically taken up by the college's partners as relationships and shared projects have developed. This year's Cliff Festival in May will reflect the global character of much of the College's current outreach and mission in its worship, speakers and content.
6. **The Queen's Foundation** - The work of The Queen's Foundation is spread across a number of centres, in all of which the Methodist Church participates and from all of which it draws great benefit. The Centre for Ministerial Formation includes those Methodist students (about half of the total) accepted as student ministers for initial training, who learn and undergo that formation in community with their Anglican counterparts in a fully ecumenical setting. The Centre for Continuing Ministerial

Development holds the ongoing work being done with Methodist probationer ministers in their studies, and there is real growth in this area of work, as almost all leaving students choose to continue on this new pathway, mostly completing their BA in Theology, Ministry and Mission. The new Centre for Black Theology is in the vanguard of such scholarly and formative work in the nation, and has grown significantly in the last year. It represents an invaluable resource for The Methodist Church in its own work of theological reflection, inclusion, and racial justice. The Foundation's engagement with scholarship and doctoral work through its research centre is also critical, through its pioneering partnership with Free University of Amsterdam, one of the finest theological faculties in the world. In addition, there is also a deepening engagement with global Christianity, reflecting the Foundation's historic commitments and deep experience in fostering exchange, capacity-building and scholarly encounter.

7. In 2019-20, the six-yearly inspection on behalf of the churches, the Periodic External Review, took place, and the Foundation was awarded the highest category possible, an unqualified 'confidence' verdict, which is a relatively rare outcome. Inspectors in particular expressed their admiration of the integrity and authenticity of the community of scholarship and prayer which they experienced, of the attentiveness and commitment of staff, and of the extent to which the Foundation's commitments to inclusion, student welfare and theological rigour were deeply rooted in the common life of the college. This is all a great tribute to the hard work of the staff and tutors, and in particular that of the Principal, David Hewlett. David retires in the summer of 2020 after long, dedicated and loving service to the College, to the churches, and in particular to staff and students, whose flourishing he has always sought and fostered. The Church is immensely grateful for his wisdom, his insight, his commitment to justice, peace and ecumenical mission, and his generosity in sharing his gifts and graces with humility and kindness. The committee wishes him every blessing in the next stage of his own discipleship.
8. ***The Church Ministry Apprenticeship Standard*** - Significant work has been undertaken with ecumenical partners on the development of an Apprenticeship Standard for local, lay ministry. It was hoped that the Church Ministry Apprenticeship Standard would give opportunities for lay people, who have significant roles in the life of the Church, to explore ministry and study for an apprenticeship degree. The standard has been benchmarked against the Common Awards (validated by the University of Durham) and Cliff College (validated by the University of Manchester) in developing a degree programme. However the government has set the funding band at £13,000 per apprentice which is a low level, and it would be difficult to top this up to a viable level, even with some support from levy funds. Following a meeting with staff at the Queen's Foundation and Cliff College in November, it was concluded that there is no current possibility of pursuing the Church Ministry Standard because of the way the government has set the funding band. We will join with others in appealing the government decision but, for the time being, the Committee regrets to say there is no viable way forward.
9. The Committee has received reports on Continuing Development in Ministry (CDiM) looking at relationships with the other institutions such as at Wesley House Cambridge and St John's College Durham in the light of the training review. This work is set in the context of an overarching strategy and aims to set out the nature of a partnership with Wesley House Cambridge, reviewing in particular three areas of work, the development of future theological educators, ministerial development and supervision. The strategy includes proposals for each minister to have an individual CDiM portfolio, for connexional funding to support the CDiM of ministers, and for new partnership agreements with the institutions through which development opportunities are available. The strategy will be considered by the SRC in April.
10. ***HE Awards criteria, new ways of working*** - In Summer 2019, the Director of Learning for Ministry and the Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee assumed responsibility for overseeing the awarding of Methodist Church grants to those, either ministers or full-time lay employees (but currently excluding Network Officers), pursuing advanced degrees at Master's and doctoral level. They have noted a number of issues which seem to have arisen as the scheme has unfolded and evolved in recent years. The

Committee has approved changes to encourage broader uptake of the awards, enable more expenditure of the budget allocated to them, and level out some of the discrepancies between lay and ordained in how the monies are spent. It is also hoped to make a clearer distinction between the relative costs of Master's and doctoral work, to build in a little more flexibility for those administering the grants, and to facilitate the means by which to target money more strategically, especially towards those whose research is particularly important, and/or who might be identified as potential future theological educators. The Committee agreed that the normal maximum for doctoral research be increased to £3,500. The Committee also approved a second grant application round in the autumn for other types of further education other than Master's or doctoral work, as funds allow.

11. The Ministries Committee is alert to the varying costs of courses and accredited programmes and to the varying level of resources that individual ministers have and therefore proposes a revision of Standing Order 745(4)(b), clauses (ii) and (iii), which currently set limits on the proportion of district and connexional funds which may be applied for towards a higher degree, and stipulate that an individual *must* contribute at least one third of the funds for any piece of continuing development which they choose to undertake (rather than that which is required). This now seems to present an unnecessary obstacle for some, and takes no account of ministers' varying circumstances and means.

Clause 4 (b), sections (ii) and (iii) of SO 745 as amended would read:

(ii) where undertaking a course of study leading to a higher education award, the person concerned may apply for a grant ~~of up to one third of the fees~~ both from the relevant District and from connexional funds;

(iii) in all other cases, the person concerned may apply for a financial contribution towards the cost of such study, training or development, these costs being borne in the proportions agreed in each individual case between connexional funds, the relevant District and the person concerned, ~~subject to the requirement that the person concerned shall be responsible for at least one third of the costs.~~

NEW PLACES FOR NEW PEOPLE (NPNP)

12. The Committee has been in receipt of regular reports on the development of the Evangelism and Growth strategy. Work on Pioneer Ministry, Church Planting and Fresh Expressions is now described as New Places for New People (NPNP) and the Ministries Committee approved the initial membership of the NPNP Guiding Team.

CHANGING PATTERNS OF MINISTRY (CPM)

13. The 2018 Conference report *Ministry in the Methodist Church* was received (in section B) as a draft statement offering a theological framework for the Methodist Church's understanding of ministry and sent out for consultation (feedback submissions were requested by 1 February); at the same time the Conference noted several aspects of the changing patterns of the Church's ministry which required further reflection. It therefore directed the Secretary of the Conference to oversee joint work by the Faith and Order, Ministries and Stationing committees to explore these areas and report to the 2020 Conference. The February Ministries Committee received and commented on a draft report from the Changing Patterns in Ministry Group and offered detailed comments.
14. ***Ministry in Local Appointment*** - The Committee received some research by the Revd Sue Wigham on the stories of those who candidate and were initially stationed as MLAs. The committee's consideration of these has fed into its contribution to the Changing Patterns of Ministry report to the 2020 Conference.
15. ***Church Stewards and Lay Leadership*** - The Committee considered Memorial 8 (2014) and Notice of Motion 2018/109.

Memorial 8 (2014) and reply are as follows:

The Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District Synod (R) (Present: 101; Voting: unanimous) believes that the time is right for a review of the Standing Orders relating to the duties and responsibilities of church stewards. In the past 20 years there have been significant changes to the exercise of leadership in local churches and this has impacted on the duties and responsibilities of stewards. Also, pragmatically, it is often challenging to find people who are comfortable with all the differing aspects of the role: some are willing and able to accomplish the 'Vestry' duties but are unwilling, or feel unsuited, to take on the leadership responsibilities. At the same time, there are people with leadership gifts who are not able, by virtue of other roles they hold, to do the 'Vestry' duties. Some churches have developed (non-executive) leadership teams which may have a minority of members who are stewards. In some churches it is the worship leader, rather than steward, who contacts the visiting preacher. Yet when new stewards are brought together for training, which at its most helpful is done across churches or even Circuits, then such training must focus on the responsibilities and duties as set out by Standing Orders 633 and 634.

The Synod notes this variety in practice across its local churches. It also believes that training is essential and should be relevant. It therefore asks the Conference to instigate a review of the Standing Orders governing church stewards, together with the wider issue of the exercise of lay leadership in the local church.

Reply

The Conference thanks the Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District Synod for its memorial and welcomes the opportunity to pay attention to the exercise of lay leadership within the life of the Methodist Church. The Conference wishes to affirm the significance of lay leadership in all its forms and notes the commitments in the Fruitful Field report to the 2012 Conference to the development of pathways which equip and nurture the ministries of the whole people of God (para 113.2).

The Conference is committed to reviewing the provision of learning and development opportunities for all forms of lay leadership in the Methodist Church including church stewards. The Conference notes the work of the Faith and Order Committee, working in collaboration with the Ministries Committee, on ministry which will help to clarify the focus of various forms of lay ministry within the Methodist Church.

The Conference notes that during the next connexional year the Ministries Committee will be considering a number of significant priorities relating to lay ministry, including the piloting of the new programme for local preachers and worship leaders, support for pioneer ministries and reviews of probationer studies and continuing development in ministry (both lay and ordained).

The Conference therefore accepts the memorial and directs the Faith and Order Committee to ensure that a review of the role and responsibilities of church stewards and other forms of lay leadership is included in the review of ministry in the Methodist Church and directs the Ministries Committee to review patterns of learning and development in this area.

The Notice of Motion 109 (2018): Church Stewards and Lay Leadership reads as follows:

The Conference notes that Part C, Section 3.3 of the Ministry in the Methodist Church report contains some reflections on the role of church stewards but does not constitute a review of the specific roles of church stewards as requested by M8 (2014).

The Memorial made this request because, in many churches, some duties defined in SO 634 are no longer carried out by church stewards, there being alternative means of fulfilling them. Such

churches are thus operating in breach of standing orders. Additionally, when church stewards are being trained in their roles and responsibilities it is helpful to have standing orders that are flexible enough to be useful in the training.

The Conference therefore directs the Ministries Committee to conduct a review of standing orders pertaining to church stewards and to bring any proposed amendments to the Conference of 2019.

A new Church Stewards' Handbook has now been completed and this is available on the website. The Ministries Committee reports to the Council that it considers the training materials and handbook give a greater level of clarity and offer sufficient guidance on how the current Standing Order should be interpreted. However the Committee requested that the Changing Patterns of Ministry group review Standing Order 634 in consultation with the Law and Polity Committee. The work of the CPM group will include reinvigoration of church stewardship as an expression of lay ministry.

LAY MINISTRIES - The committee continues to support local lay ministry as follows:

16. *Process of submitting portfolios for worship leading and preaching (M24/2019)* - The Conference referred to the Ministries Committee the issues contained in the Memorial, about the difficulties experienced by some in studying through electronic media, and directed the Committee to make Circuits aware of funding sources for equipment and to ensure that electronic platforms are as accessible as they can be. Work is under way on helping people submit a portfolio online. The course is designed for people with digital literacy and technical support for those who need it is a significant barrier. Preachers in training need to have some level of technological literacy and the Learning Network (LN) should be available to help those experiencing difficulties. If resources are available in the circuit, rural circuits could offer support. Work has been carried out on the Moodle platform (the host of Worship: Leading and Preaching) to enable the course to be printed locally without printing pages of blank space. This will improve accessibility, alongside the media items being made available on a pen drive from the Local Preachers Office.

Further work on how to simplify the assessment and submission processes has led to a reassessment around the practicalities of the Moodle system. The Local Preachers' Board of Studies has directed a root and branch review of both processes, in order to achieve a clearer assessment system. The test to the vocation of local preachers and the skills of preaching will be rightfully sited locally, in the Local Preachers Meeting. The test of whether a person can reflect theologically, and turn that reflection into the art of preaching and leading worship, will be assessed connexionally.

17. ***Development of Worship Leaders and Preachers (M25/2019)*** – The Conference agreed that the Ministries committee will receive an annual report on the work of worship leaders and local preachers, and in particular their initial training and ongoing development, which will then be included in the reports of the Ministries Committee to the Council, and thus to the Conference. This report was received in February.

As of January 2020, there were 6,171 active local preachers recorded on the connexional database.

Concerning those in training:

- 201 portfolios were successfully completed on the Worship: Leading & Preaching course in 2019.
- Of these, 31 were from Worship Leaders, indicating that 31 new Worship Leaders had completed the WL training (modules 1 – 4). 88 were Portfolio LPA, (modules 1 – 4), and 82 were Portfolio LPB, indicating completion of LP training.
- During the year, 104 new students enrolled as Worship Leaders, and 167 as Local Preachers.

- On the Faith & Worship course, 111 portfolios were assessed in 2019 (four are submitted during the entire course). Of these 51 were for Section D, which provides an approximation of those who completed the course during the year.
- 103 new Local Preachers were recognised during the year, as indicated by the number of President's Letters requested.

The number of Local Preachers reported to have died was 235. Further details are available from the conferenceoffice@methodistchurch.org.uk. This and other information requested in the memorial will be made available through the quarterly Local Preachers' and Worship Leaders' News and other communications.

18. **Local Preachers Board of Studies** - the committee was asked to provide for the Board of Studies revised Terms of Reference which are now in use. These clarify that the Board reports to the Ministries Committee annually.
19. **Necessitous Local Preachers Fund (NLPF)** - The Council directed the Ministries Committee to take over the administration of this fund, and relationships have proved more complex than originally thought. The Secretary of the Conference has met with representatives from the Board of Leaders and Worship and Preachers' Trust (LWPT) and work is ongoing to enable the NLPF to be used.

MATTERS RELATING TO ORDAINED MINISTRY

20. **Chinese Ministry M19, 20 (2019)** - The Conference directed the Ministries Committee to work with the Circuit-Based Learning Pathway working group to investigate where appropriate possibilities might be found to nurture the call to presbyteral and diaconal ministry in Chinese and other ethnically based congregations. A questionnaire survey was sent out over the summer and a meeting of the Chinese congregation leaders took place in November to discuss how vocations are being nurtured in those fellowship groups. It was agreed by the participants that three working groups would be formed to work on the following themes: Vocations for the different forms of ministry, including ordained ministry; Youth Ministry Group; Local Preachers and Worship Leader training.
21. In response to a Memorial to the 2019 Conference, Obituaries (M23/2019) - The Committee recommended a revision of the phrase which appears at the end of obituaries "*in the xxx year of their ministry*" to read "*in the xxx year of their presbyteral or diaconal ministry.*"
22. **Obituaries for Student Ministers (SO 153 and SO 182)** – There is currently a difference in CPD between the Standing Orders for presbyteral and diaconal obituaries. While student deacons are given an obituary, student presbyters are not. The following addition to SO 153(3) is therefore proposed to the Council:

153 Obituaries.

[...]

(3) The Secretary of the Conference shall each year receive from the secretaries of the Synods the obituaries of deceased presbyters and presbyteral probationers which have been approved by the Synods, and from circuit Superintendents those of presbyters and presbyteral probationers who have died subsequently. ***In the case of a student presbyter's death, the Principal of the relevant training institution will be responsible for having an obituary produced and sending it to the Secretary.*** The Secretary of the Conference shall, if necessary, revise the obituaries and shall include them in the Agenda. They shall be presented to the Conference in its Presbyteral Session for adoption, with any further revision accepted by the Conference.

23. The Committee has been aware of a number of concerns around **Wellbeing in Ordained Ministry** – see Memorials to the 2019 Conference M1 and M2 on Reimbursements for stipends of ministers on long

term sick leave / Amendment of SO365 and M18 on Ministerial Workload. The Committee has commissioned a piece of research which is being carried out by the Revd Dr Philip J Richter through questionnaires and interviews and is being structured around the nine competencies for ministry, considering well-being in each area from the perspective of the minister and from the perspective of the environment (which includes local church, wider church and society in general). Dr Richter will be working with a small reference group and will consult with the District Chairs. The Revd Kenneth G Howcroft is supporting this project by carrying out a paper review of the research being carried out by other denominations as well as previous relevant Methodist Conference reports. The Committee considered a number of suggestions about improving ministerial wellbeing that emerged from a listening day in 2019. The task group will provide a report from the research for the September 2020 meeting of the Ministries Committee.

24. **Competencies for Probationers** - Since the Conference (2016) approved the revised criteria for candidating, the Ministries Committee has approved the competencies for different stages of ministry which follow from them. Those currently in probation candidated on the old criteria and therefore have been assessed to this point on the older competencies. The Ministries Committee resolved that the new competencies should be introduced to the processes for discernment and assessment of probationers starting in September 2020. The forms, handbook and processes are being updated during the 2019/2020 connexional year.
25. **Review of Candidating** - The Ministries Committee asked for information about the candidating process which was provided for the September 2019 meeting. This was in response to the Candidates Selection Committee Co-Chairs request for a mandate from the Ministries Committee if a root and branch review of the candidating process was to be carried out. A decision on such a large scale review is pending the outcome of the Vocations Strategy research project on candidating numbers. The Committee will consider at a future meeting whether such a review of candidating is required in light of the research project.
26. **Candidating Process** - The Committee considered an adjustment to the grading method used within the process. The grading throughout the candidating process is now: 1: exceeds criteria, 2: meets criteria, 3: does not yet meet criteria, 4: does not meet criteria.

The exception to this has been the portfolio which is still: 1: good, 2: satisfactory, 3: unsatisfactory.

This is because Standing Order 710(2) concerning the portfolio is couched in the language of 'satisfying' a Connexional Assessment Panel that the portfolio is of the required standard. The portfolio assessors would prefer to work with the same grading as the rest of the process, and to move away from the language of 'satisfactory' and 'unsatisfactory' from the connexional year 2020/2021. Then a grade 4 would be the only one where the portfolio would be deemed not to have met the required standard. A grade 3 would give the assessors space to indicate the additional work that is needed. The Ministries Committee agreed that this would still meet the requirements of the standing order 710(2)(A).

The Committee agreed that the same four tier grading method be used for the portfolio as is used throughout the candidating process, that is: 1: exceeds criteria, 2: meets criteria, 3: does not yet meet criteria, 4: does not meet criteria.

27. **Manses Group** – The Revd Jenny A Impey has been appointed as the new Chair of the Group. The criteria have been clarified for the group which determines whether a presbyter be permitted to live in her/his own home and the chair has met District Chairs to explain the process and the criteria.
28. **Fellowships Groups** - The Assistant Ecumenical Officer continues to work with the Fellowship Groups sub-committee on development of a strategy. There was a residential meeting for chaplains and representatives of the fellowship groups in January, which included an introduction to the Methodist Way of Life. There will be a further report to the June meeting.

29. ***Proposals from the Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee (MCPOC) and from the Queens Oversight Committee*** – the committee heard a report from a meeting that had looked at the relationships between the different oversight bodies and the experience of discontinuance processes in recent years. The group recommended a review of the membership of MCPOC which currently includes members of committees whose decisions MCPOC reviews and changes to the appeals processes for candidates, students and probationers. The Ministries Committee recognised the difficulties that had been identified and the complexity of the issues and asked for more work to be done in collaboration with the Law and Polity Committee.

The Ministries Committee was asked to determine how this relates to the Methodist Diaconal Order's oversight processes: Wise Seniors and Religious Order Advisory Committee.

Changes will be required to Standing Orders:

- Standing Orders 030-037 relating to the discontinuance of students and probationers. This would now be the responsibility of MCPOC rather than the Connexional Review Committee.
- Standing Order 715 relating to candidates' appeals.
- Standing Orders 720-729 relating to oversight of students and probationers, up to their ordination and reception into Full Connexion.

The Ministries Committee recognised that these are major changes and proposes that further work be done in consultation with the Law and Polity Committee.

MINISTERS OF OTHER CONFERENCES AND CHURCHES (MOCCS)

30. ***Authorised to Serve status*** - In March 2016 a guidance paper titled 'In addition to the Circuit Staff' was produced specifically to help Superintendents and District Chairs in encouraging the ministry of ordained presbyters who live in a circuit but are not members of the circuit staff stationed to the circuit. The document did not generally include deacons though the same principles apply. Since September 2018, some issues have emerged relating specifically to the category of 'Authorised to serve' which required discussion by the Ministries Committee who recommend a change to the Standing Order 732 to clear up some anomalies, as follows.

732 Persons Recognised and Regarded as Presbyters or Deacons. [...]

(3) [...]

(b) Persons seeking to be so specified must in the case of ~~ministers~~ **presbyters** have been ordained to the ministry of word and sacraments in a church whose ministry is recognised by the Methodist Church or in the case of deacons have been ordained to the diaconate in an autonomous conference or in a church whose diaconate is recognised by the Methodist Church.

[...]

(d) All such applications shall be made ~~in the case of ministers~~ to the Secretary of the Conference, and in the case of deacons **also** to the Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order ~~and the Secretary of the Conference~~, and in either case by the date annually determined by the Ministerial Candidates Selection Committee under Standing Order 730(2)(a) or (b), as applicable.

31. The Ministerial Coordinator for Oversight of Ordained Ministries (MCOOM) brought to the attention of the committee some complex anomalies around 'Authorised to Serve' status and processes in relation to transferring ministers from other countries, which require a thorough review. The issues include the following:

- The Deed of Union 44 Other Autonomous Conferences (b) states: *Persons authorised by any autonomous Methodist Conference to exercise generally (whether or not by the name of presbyter) a ministry of word and sacrament, if stationed in the home Districts or overseas, shall*

during the period of such stationing only be recognised and regarded as presbyters of the Methodist Church admitted into Full Connexion.

- The Deed of Union 45 Presbyters from other Churches (a) states: *Such other persons as the Conference may from time to time specify, if stationed as presbyters in the home Districts or overseas shall during their period of such stationing only be recognised and regarded as presbyters of the Methodist Church admitted into Full Connexion.*
- The way these clauses and Standing Order 730, 732 and 733 have been interpreted is that there are some occasions when the Conference stations ministers without them having recognised and regarded status.
- The Authorised to Serve status was not designed to be used for ministers from other countries to start work in the UK more quickly than would otherwise be the case. That it has been used in this way, demonstrates that there is a need for a process to enable this to happen, but it might need to be a different process than Authorised to Serve.
- When someone who is Authorised to Serve applies for R&R or to come into Full Connexion, and is not recommended, the result is very painful and appears not to take notice of the ministry they have already been carrying out in the MCB. That is likely to be because most of the transfer panels' work is usually focused on those applying to serve the MCB from another context, who are not yet in ministry in the UK.
- If such an applicant is not recommended, they can still continue as Authorised to Serve, which is renewable annually. That raises questions then about what it means not to be recommended as R&R if their ministry in exactly the same context is still acceptable as Authorised to Serve. The only difference is that as Authorised to Serve they are accountable to the home church for their general vocation and development, whereas as R&R ministers are accountable to the Conference for their general vocation and development.
- If an applicant to be R&R is not recommended, they have no right of appeal. This has been regarded as unfair for those who are already exercising ministry in MCB. Those who apply to come into Full Connexion do have the right of appeal.

The committee agreed that Standing Order 732 be further reviewed. They directed that a guidance note be developed to clarify the use of Authorised to Serve and Recognised and Regarded in regard to transferring ministers by the Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee with the MCOOM. This will be added to the MCB website as an interim measure while other decisions are pending.

The committee requested that the Methodist Council set up a review group to consider the issues raised. It is suggested that the review of SO 732 becomes part of the remit of this review group. The Methodist Council is further requested to decide on a timetable for this work.

32. **MOCCS Oversight Committee** - The 2017 Conference agreed the establishment of a small oversight group for Ministers of other Conferences and Churches in order to receive reports on the recommendations of the Ministerial Candidates' Selection Committee, the outcomes of initial stationing, the engagement of the Ministerial Coordinator for Oversight of Ordained Ministries with ministers of other Conferences and Churches, and on the supervision of the ministers of other Conferences and Churches. The Ministries Committee appointed the group in 2018. Since that time several new processes and procedures have been put in place. These include the roll-out of supervision, and changes in the application, induction and stationing process for MOCCs. These changes have had positive outcomes, which means that the perceived need for an oversight committee has been overtaken by events. The Committee reviewed the role of the MOCC Oversight

Committee and concluded that it should be disbanded, because its work is now adequately performed in other places. It therefore asks the Methodist Council to agree to its disbandment.

STUDENT MATTERS

33. **Full-time Student Ministers and Finance** – the Committee made some detailed amendments to the way in which bursary figures are calculated for those students who are at the Queen’s Foundation on a circuit based learning pathway, to align with bursaries for those students on the full-time pathway. The Committee directed that the circuit-based learning pathway be added into the table of calculated bursaries. The Committee directed that the figures for grants should be amended for the 2020/2021 connexional year, and recalculated by a percentage so that it increases each year.
34. **Vocations** -The Ministries Committee has continued to support the work to increase the opportunities for people to explore a vocation to ordained ministry, recognising that this is set within a broader question about the nature of ministry and the need for all, lay and ordained, to reflect on their vocations.
35. The Committee commissioned The Revd Dr Philip J Richter to carry out some research into the fall in candidating numbers, attempting to find out what might help more people respond to a call to ordained ministry. This project was commissioned with a view to enhancing this area of the Church’s work. A link to the research paper can be found on the web page <https://www.methodist.org.uk/signpostforministry/> It is worth stressing that this is a research paper that the committee chose to make widely available; it is not, as was reported in some places, a policy statement.
36. The Committee was pleased to learn that a Connexional Vocations Advisor had been seconded from the Network on a 0.5 basis for two years, and that the ‘vocations project’ is now underway and already includes: the development of centrally run Exploring Ordained Ministry Days; offering clarity on the work of advocacy to encourage others to explore vocation; work on pilots projects to see the impact of intentional change with regards vocation; work with some young adults and some BAME Methodists to learn more about how we can widen participation; the production of appropriate materials.
37. **The Theology and Ecclesiology Underpinning the Diaconate** - Some members of the Ministries Committee are working with members of the Ministries Team on a range of complex issues arising from the Conference report to the 2019 Conference. This group would carry out a scoping exercise and report to the September 2020 meeting of the Committee.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

41/1. The Council receives the report.

41/2. The Council recommends to the Conference the changes to Standing Order 745(4)(b) as laid out in report.

paragraph 11

41/3. The Council recommends to the Conference a revision of the phrase which appears at the end of obituaries “in the xxx year of their ministry” to read “in the xx year of their presbyteral or diaconal ministry.”

paragraph 21

41/4. The Council recommends to the Conference that Standing Order 153 be revised as laid out in report.

paragraph 22

41/5. The Council recommends to the Conference that Standing Order 732 be revised as laid out in report.

paragraph 31

41/6. The Council directs that a review group be set up to consider issues around Authorised to Serve status for transferring ministers and that a full review of Standing Order 732 becomes part of the remit of the group.

paragraph 31

41/7. The Council directs that the Ministers of Other Conferences and Churches Oversight Committee be disbanded.

paragraph 32

41/8. The Council commends the report and its recommendations to the Conference.