

Connexional Team Update

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Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	Note
Resolution	82/1. The Council receives the report

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	This paper offers the Council an update of work undertaken by the Connexional Team since the Council last met in April 2017.
Main Points	Work that is going on in the Team

- 1 This report provides the Council with an update of work undertaken by the Connexional Team since the Council last met in April 2017. In September the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) approved the Work Plan for 2017/18 which includes an allocation of the tasks commissioned by the 2017 Conference, noting that a substantial amount has been allocated to the Connexional Team. A paper is also before the Council providing updates on specific items from the work plan.

Data Protection

- 2 A data protection working group is overseeing a work plan of tasks required for the Council to be compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations which come into force in March 2018, with progress being reported to the SRC. Given the importance of this work the group is currently made up of the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice, the Connexional Secretary and the Internal Services Manager from the Team. This work includes updating data protection policies which will be shared with the Council during this connexional year alongside guidance on data protection for churches and circuits. Some additional information in this area is included in the Support Services section below.

New Agreements

- 3 The European Methodist Council was held in Britain in mid-September, with a particular highlight being the signing of the Community of Methodist and Wesleyan Churches in Europe Agreement, at Wesley's Chapel. This agreement is the first of its kind between Methodist, Wesleyan, and Uniting Churches in Europe, and seeks to strengthen the Churches' relationships with each other and to celebrate and affirm each other's baptism and administration of the eucharist, as well as the validity of respective ordinations and ministries (including lay ministry).
- 4 A further agreement due to be signed soon is the Armed Forces Community Covenant. The Council (in April 2017) agreed to sign the Covenant following consideration of paper MC/17/68, and the official signing of the covenant will take place on 14 November 2017 at Methodist Church House at a special Methodist Forces Board event.

Curtailments

- 5 The Team reports that the following curtailments (made at the request of the ministers) have been agreed:
The Revd Ian Bell
The Revd Alan Bolton
Deacon Richard Goldstraw
These appointments will end on 31 August 2018.

Updates from clusters in the Connexional Team:

Discipleship and Ministries

Church and Community

- 6 The induction service for the new Youth President, Michael Pryke, was held at Stamford Methodist Church on 3 September. Since starting with us in August, Michael has already undertaken a trip to visit United Methodist Church partners with the Connexional Secretary and visited Scotland and Southern and Islands Regional Coordinators. He has also attended the One Programme Participants weekend and taken part in a think tank regarding university chaplaincy.
- 7 *Rise and Shine* - a weekend event to which churches across the Connexion send young people aged 16-23 who are showing leadership potential was held at Cliff College from 7–9 July. This gathered thirty young leaders together and offered a programme of worship, prayer, activities, teaching on leadership and times of fellowship and support.
- 8 *3Generate* has tripled in size in the last four years (current figures are approximately one thousand 8-18 year olds, forty 18-23 year olds and three hundred leaders), and this success story now poses challenges to the team. Finding and managing a new venue and turning around the development, facilitation and planning of a completely new style of engagement in under one year has been a challenge. This has involved volunteers, children and young people in planning and facilitation and finding skilled volunteers to support *3Generate* as stewards, facilitators or roving support teams. Only two Districts are currently not represented, the Isle of Man and Shetland. It is hoped to find young people from these Districts before November's event.
- 9 Preparations are under way for *All Together Now: Bringing Generations Together* – a one-day conference organised by the Methodist Church and Bible Reading Fellowship, exploring the theory and practice of intergenerational church, which takes place on Tuesday 10 October 2017. This will pilot a live-streamed conference – one that offers participation from anywhere with online access (eg a church office, at home etc – there will not be a physical event to attend). Further information can be found at <http://www.methodist.org.uk/mission/families/events/altogether-now>

Ministry Development Team

- 10 There has been an expansion of the *Worship: Leading and Preaching Summer School* at Cliff College which is coordinated by Bob Bartindale. The students offered positive feedback and we hope to continue to expand the Summer School next year to include all eight modules.
- 11 We will be offering the first Cliff College Autumn School in November this year. The event is being hosted at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster and we have up to 25 places available. This is a four day non-residential 'Introduction to Theology' course, and is especially designed

to allow people from around the capital and further afield to take part in a Cliff College Short Course.

- 12 We are pleased to note the completion of Modules 1-8 as overseen by the Board of Studies, and the first students completing *Worship: Leading and Preaching*. An *Additional Needs Guide* has been devised for the course. A small working group (made up of specialists in the field from around the Connexion) and led by Philip Richter have been working on this comprehensive support package to be rolled out and trialled this connexional year, to make the training of those called by God to lead worship a much more inclusive process.

Discipleship Development Team

- 13 The actions proposed by the consultation on spirituality in the Methodist Church (held in October 2016) are being followed up in various ways, including supporting the Vice-President of the Conference in organising a conference on pilgrimage. A meeting in May helped to develop the consultation's proposals and established two working groups involving Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network (DMLN) staff and others to move them forward. One group will work on bringing practitioners together and the other on ways of making spirituality integral to the life of Methodists.

Research, Scholarship and Innovation

- 14 Building on two previous study tours in Northern Ireland and Croatia, a study tour/pilgrimage has been arranged in consultation with World Church Relationships to take place between 17 and 30 November 2017, and will be led by the Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal. These opportunities that explore particular themes in context are providing people with challenging and life-changing experiences.
- 15 The *Leading Together in Growing Methodist Churches in the North East* research report has been completed. Every Methodist church in the North East will receive a printed version as will all District Chairs and Superintendents. This work will be linked with the *Regrouping for Mission* research, evangelism research, and ongoing Fresh Expressions research, to develop a suite of useful research documents on church growth and evangelism.

Regional teams

- 16 *Gŵyl Coda* festival is an exciting new initiative in Wales which engages and inspires people, churches and communities towards faith and action, with three festivals planned starting in July 2018. DMLN Cymru Wales is involved in supporting the network by involving Methodists in Wales, particularly by promoting and contributing to *Coda's* provision relating to Welsh language and culture.
- 17 The ONE Opportunity North East programme started in September 2016 with eleven young people for the first year, and it is hoped a similar number will start in September 2017. The participants have been working three hours a week in their local church in areas such as social media, drama, community shops, children's ministry and sports coaching. Mentoring is an important element of the programme with a local church member alongside each young person to offer encouragement.
- 18 DMLN staff members are working with the Church of Scotland's 'Why Believe' group in creating accessible and relevant apologetics-focused materials for "people in the pews". One of the priorities for the work of the DMLN team next year is developing biblical literacy. Materials produced by a small and informal writing group headed up by a supernumerary

presbyter, the Revd Gerald Bostock, have been warmly received and this work will progress in the coming months.

- 19 In October the Team will host an 'Islands Ministry Conference' where those from islands across the Connexion can join together to address and discuss island issues.

One Interns

- 20 Eight young people started on the One Intern programme in September. This extension of the One Participant Programme sees a partnership between host organisations and the church to offer full time high-level paid internships in a variety of sectors. Five residential meetings are planned for the year focusing on discipleship, leadership, vocation and ethical decision making. Each intern will also be assigned a mentor.

Mission and Advocacy

Engagement

- 21 An individual donation route for the Mission in Britain Fund, under the heading *igive2mission* has now been launched. Materials for Aldersgate Sunday encouraging both the sharing of testimonies and financial response to support mission have been developed. The New Room, Bristol, has been rededicated, and a new governance structure for Epworth Old Rectory has been adopted (see the Methodist Heritage Committee report). As part of establishing how to communicate better with, and listen to, the Connexion, the marketing team has been conducting an audit to identify the interest groups and 'advocates' with whom we are currently in regular contact.

Publishing and Communications

- 22 Publications produced recently include Issue 9 of *the connexion*, using the theme of Transformational Leadership; the 2017/18 Prayer Handbook, *Jesus the First and Last; One Mission Matters* 'thank you' issue; and products for the President and Vice-President, including the Day by Day prayer booklets, the 'spiritual five a day' post card and the Presidential Prayer card. *A Discipling Presence* was launched recently, the updated resource published in conjunction with the URC for use in rural communities (with accompanying videos). A complete redesign is underway of JMA (Junior Mission for All) materials.
- 23 The media team has provided support for the Revd Mike Long, minister of Notting Hill Methodist Church, which is next to the Grenfell Tower. New video content has been produced for YouTube and Vimeo, including: Highlights of the Conference; an interview with the new Youth President, Michael Pryke; Mission work in Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Israel-Palestine, South Korea, Asia, Japan and Papua New Guinea; a range of videos for use with new staff training platform; promotion of the new Encounter programme; a tribute to Dr Pauline Webb; an interview with Action for Children; and an interview with Bishop Angaelos.

Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT)

- 24 Within three weeks of the general election being called, JPIT delivered resources for the General Election on theology, issues and hustings advice. At the Methodist Conference JPIT facilitated the Beckly Lecture given by His Grace Bishop Angaelos. An article has been published on the UK arms industry, in the light of Conference concerns around the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia and in response to the Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) show (<http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/good-for-us-the-uk-arms-industry/>), and a

briefing on the UN Nuclear Ban Treaty has been produced in advance of the treaty being opened for signing by countries on 20 September.

- 25 Six bible studies around housing and homelessness – a place to call home, have been launched and are available at <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/aplacetocallhome/>. Work highlighting the impact of benefit cuts on the lives of people in poverty has continued, with blogs, news releases and ecumenical work. From September we have a new full-time JPIT intern and will also benefit from part of the time of two ONE interns allocated to the House of Lords.

World Church Relationships (WCR)

- 26 Work continues on implementing the strategy for global relationships, with further details in the Global Relationships Strategic Oversight Sub-Committee report before the Council. Senior discussions were undertaken with All We Can (AWC), with consideration of radical options, which includes the possibility of bringing AWC and WCR into a single organisation. The outputs from this process will be reported separately to the Council.
- 27 A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Methodist Church in Britain (MCB), AWC and the Methodist Church of Sierra Leone (MCSL) for a pioneering project under which all three organisations will work together on ‘capacity building’ within MCSL. This is intended as a pilot for similar work in other places. WCR has provided support to the AWC appeals for East Africa and Yemen; with AWC supporting the WCR appeal for Sierra Leone (landslide) and the Caribbean (hurricane). Funds raised for hurricane relief will be routed through the United Methodist Committee on Relief for implementation.
- 28 World Church representatives were ‘buddied’ with Districts at the Conference, to improve their integration with other Conference members and encourage new relationships. The first grants round that deals simultaneously with all types of grant application from any single country is well underway following the application deadline in August.

Support Services

Finance Office

- 29 Although significant progress has been made in resolving various issues, there is still considerable work needed to ensure that the Church receives the level of payrolls service that it requires. This involves ongoing development of both staff and systems, including input from a specialist payroll consultant.
- 30 Preparation of the 2016/2017 Consolidated Accounts is now underway. After the changes made in 2016 relating to the adoption of the new FRS 102 SORP it is hoped that this year will be much more straightforward. As part of this work, administration of the Methodist International Centre (MIC) Trust is moving from MIC Ltd to the Connexional Team.
- 31 The review of employment tax arrangements for ministers and employees resulted in a clear and detailed agreement with HMRC covering each category of ministerial grant. Revised forms have been implemented by the Connexional Allowances Committee and new guidance issued to ministers and treasurers via the quarterly newsletter.
- 32 Maureen Sebanakitta left her post as Director of Financial Operations on 29 September and an interim director has been appointed.

Human Resources and Development (HR&D)

- 33 The summer period saw the culmination of the first year of the new arrangements for administering the Church's sponsorship of work permits for ministers coming from outside the EU to serve the Church here. This has resulted in a significant learning curve and consequent increase in work for some of the HR&D team.
- 34 Alongside this the HR&D team has been busy supporting the review of all Team job descriptions over the last six months, plus the new performance measurement process linked to pay reviews. The deadline for job description reviews was 31 August and it has been a significant piece of work, not only for HR&D, but particularly line managers across the Team.
- 35 We have recently been informed by HMRC of its intention to investigate the entire Church regarding its conformity to statutory minimum pay legislation. This will include all local lay employees, in addition to those of the Council and ministers, so data collection is underway. Responding to this will be a collaborative effort between Support Services and the Conference Office – an initial meeting with HMRC in mid-October will reveal the level and amount of work involved.
- 36 The Council's occupational health provider, Interhealth, unexpectedly went into administration in July. Work is underway to identify a new provider, but interim arrangements are also being put in place to support various processes on behalf of the Conference. The concept of a Wellbeing Network to support the work of the Connexional Adviser is being explored.

Facilities and Property

- 37 The work of the Property Development Committee has continued to be supported. In addition to work on a connexional property strategy, the committee is focusing on the importance of quinquennial inspections, the reliability of data and on supporting several exemplar projects. Failure to appoint a Connexional Property Development Adviser has put pressure on other staff, so we are pleased that an interim part-time appointment has been made from September 2017.
- 38 The team is working with the MCH Management Committee on long-term maintenance plans for the building and has also overseen the redevelopment work at Frances Young House, 24 Somerset Road, which has now been handed over for use by the Queen's Foundation. Attention has moved to the proposed redevelopments of Camden Town Methodist Church and the property at Oxford Place, Leeds.

IT and database

- 39 A specialist external data/process analyst led a piece of work which confirmed the general soundness of the connexional database. He also worked with IT staff to produce a formal IT development/planning process template to improve the control of future systems improvements. The team has played a key role in developing the MCH Business Continuity Plan, with specific back-up routines still being embedded.

Archives and Data Protection

- 40 The results of a data protection audit have been received, with various recommendations now to be implemented – some at significant cost of time and money. On-line training has been procured and rolled out to all members of the Team as part of the demonstration of our commitment to compliance on behalf of the Church. Attention has since turned to preparing

for the May 2018 implementation of the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which will replace the Data Protection Act and place significantly more responsibility on all organisations to manage data more effectively. This is a large piece of new compliance work. The Internal Services Manager has gained accreditation as a certified GDPR Practitioner and a temporary post is being created to lead on developing more detailed guidance for both the Team and wider Connexion alongside the Working Group.

Procurement

- 41 In addition to regular work relating to various contracts, such as those for venues for the Conference and other residential meetings, the Procurement Manager played a leading part in the process of inviting and assessing tenders for DBS provision and now for negotiating with the selected provider. The Team's travel booking arrangements are currently being re-tendered and she is working with the Conference Office and TMCP Legal to support the process of identifying a panel of recommended solicitors across the Connexion.

The Conference Office

- 42 The life of the Conference Office during the summer was dominated by the work necessary to facilitate and then to follow up the Conference. Preparations are now underway for the 2018 Methodist Conference. This is a new venue for the Conference, sited on a large campus two miles from the centre of Nottingham.
- 43 The appointment of The Revd Dr Jonathan R Hustler as Assistant Secretary has created a vacancy for a Ministerial Coordinator for Oversight of Ordained Ministries. This post has been advertised and interviews will take place in October. In the interim, we are grateful to three supernumerary ministers who have been willing to take on discrete parts of this brief: the Revd Kenneth Carveley is helping to identify ordination venues in Nottingham, the Revd Anne Brown is leading on initial stationing, and the Revd John Lampard is serving as Secretary of the Ministerial Candidates' Selection Committee.

*****RESOLUTION**

- 82/1. The Council receives the report.**