

The MDO as a Religious Order – Working Group

Contact Name and Details	The Revd Canon Gareth J Powell, Secretary of the Conference soc@methodistchurch.org.uk
Resolutions	107/1. The Council receives the report. 107/2. The Council amends the reporting timeline for the working group considering the Methodist Diaconal Order as a religious order, and notes that it will report to the Council in April 2019, prior to the 2019 Conference.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The 2016 Conference received an interim report on *The Theology and Ecclesiology Underpinning the Diaconate* (Report 33), which advocated “the need for further clarity to be brought as to the nature of the MDO as a religious order in the British Methodist Church” (para. 6.5). In response, the Conference agreed the following resolutions:

33/2. The Conference directed the Methodist Council, with the Methodist Diaconal Order and the Faith and Order Committee, to consider whether the religious order should be opened to receive into membership Methodists who are lay or ordained to presbyteral ministry and report to the 2018 Conference.

33/3. The Conference directed the Methodist Council, with the Methodist Diaconal Order and the Faith and Order Committee, to consider whether those whom it ordains to the diaconal order of ministry continue to be required also to become members of the religious order and report to the 2018 Conference.

1.2 In order to address these significant and complex questions, the Council, in October 2016, appointed a small group to take forward this work and to advise the Council in sufficient time to enable it to report to the 2018 Conference. The group comprised Mrs Stella Bristow (Chair), the Revd Dr Richard N Clutterbuck, Deacon Deborah Marsh, Deacon Stephen F Roe. Unfortunately, Mrs Bristow had to step down from the group and a new Chair, Mrs Rosemary Harrison, was appointed by the President and Vice-President in February 2017.

2.0 Timeline

2.1 In view of the delay in their being able to begin the work, and in view of the sensitivity of the work involved, the group now asks the Council to permit them to report in 2019, rather than 2018. The Methodist Diaconal Order and the Faith and Order Committee have been consulted about this request, in the light of the impact it will have on other work. Both the Order and the Faith and Order Committee are content that it should be delayed, particularly given the significance of the work and the need for thorough consultations to be conducted.

***RESOLUTIONS

107/1. The Council receives the report.

107/2. The Council amends the reporting timeline for the working group considering the Methodist Diaconal Order as a religious order, and notes that it will report to the Council in April 2019, prior to the 2019 Conference.