

## Update on work from the Conference

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<b>Action Required</b>	Decision
<b>Resolution</b>	75/1. The Council receives the report.

The Council is asked to note the following updates on work from the 2016 Conference.

### 1. M37 Benefit sanctions

*... The Conference therefore thanks the Newcastle upon Tyne District for this memorial, and: ... c) directs the Methodist Council to ensure that the Joint Public Issues Team seeks other opportunities for the Methodist Church to work with the Church of England and other sister churches in calling for change and raising the issues contained in the memorial with other members of the Government.*

The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) is offering support to the Newcastle District as their campaigning work continues. JPIT is also carrying out further research into the impact of sanctions on people with mental health problems as well as looking at the “Hardship Payment” system which is supposed to provide support to families that face destitution due to sanctions. Continuing work on the issues, and with those living in poverty, is a key priority in JPIT’s workplan for this year, and part c) of this memorial is considered completed.

### 2. M25 Order of service for baptisms

*[Given the resources that are already available, the guidance and texts within the Methodist Worship Book, and the diversity of contemporary British Methodism, the Conference does not believe it is appropriate to produce new orders of service for baptism at this time; but directs the Faith and Order Committee to produce some alternative baptism resources in accessible language that adhere to the structure of the authorised texts and thus retain the Methodist emphasis on prevenient grace.] The Conference also directs the Methodist Council to ensure that the Connexional Team gives further consideration to appropriate ways of making existing resources available in electronic formats and for on-screen use.*

Providing a range of materials in electronic format has been referred to the new Publishing and Communications Board. It was discussed at their meeting on 23 June and agreed as a priority. Actions are in hand to test e-versions of the *Methodist Worship Book* and to scope a broader project covering digital rights and usage of other material. Following these actions being taken forward, the part of this memorial that directs work towards the Connexional Team is considered completed.

### 3. M23 Connexional requirements upon office holders

*... Each area of data gathering has its own guidance notes and the facility for the relevant members of the Connexional Team to be contacted with specific queries. The Conference feels this is sufficient, but directs the Methodist Council to ensure that the Connexional Team continues to engage actively with local office holders in order to ensure that the interactive websites are as user-friendly as possible.*

The new post of Web Support Officer has specifically been created to bring the support of the various aspects of the interactive websites all within one post. They work closely with the Consents Web Officer and in addition to responding to queries from individuals, they attend

gatherings of office holders at events such as the Resourcing Mission Forum and District Property Secretary meetings. As these opportunities regularly take place the actions from this memorial are considered completed.

#### **4. M34 Arms exports**

*The Conference thanks the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District Synod for drawing attention to this important matter. Since the start of the conflict in Yemen over 6,000 people have been killed, almost half of them civilians, and over 30,000 people have been injured. The Conference accepts this memorial and directs the Methodist Council to ensure that information about engagement on these issues and suggestions for action by Methodists be made available, with the agreement of our ecumenical partners, at [www.jointpublicissues.org.uk](http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk).*

At least two reports from the parliamentary joint committee are being published in September. The initial response of the Joint Public Issues Team will be to facilitate correspondence from the President and Vice-President of the Conference to the FCO (Foreign & Commonwealth Office) on this issue. The topic is being considered as a part of the workplan for JPIT and their partners in 2016/17 with a view to developing appropriate materials and actions for church members, and will be considered completed once the materials are published on the website.

#### **5. M35 and M36 Support for refugees**

*Campaigning on this issue, on behalf of the Methodist Church and our ecumenical partners, is being led by the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT). Without seeking to prescribe the detailed priorities of that work, in a constantly changing international political context, the Conference directs the Methodist Council to ensure that JPIT continues to give high priority to campaigning on refugee and asylum issues with the aim of securing a much-improved humanitarian response from the UK Government and encouraging the international community to seek just and peaceful solutions.*

Response to the refugee crisis is one of the three most significant pieces of work programmed in the JPIT workplan for 2016-17. This includes putting in place a campaign and programme of political advocacy to highlight issues facing asylum seekers and to challenge the iniquities of the asylum system. This work is likely to extend across the connexional year, and as this will continue to be a priority the response to the memorials is considered completed.

#### **6. NOM 2016/206 Climate Change**

*Climate change is a huge challenge. The Conference commends study of "Hope in God's Future" and, bearing in mind the Paris Agreement in 2015, the Conference asks the Methodist Council to encourage further work to move from two degrees to one point five degrees (2°C to 1.5°C); and thereby to try to save Pacific Island States like Tuvalu and Kiribati from drowning; and invites all Methodist Congregations to take the Eco Church challenge. The Conference adopted the Motion.*

A paper is being drafted for the Senior Leadership Group of the Connexional Team outlining options for taking this work forward. In the meantime, *Hope in God's Future* is available from the Methodist Church website or in printed form from Methodist Publishing, and links from the website take users to Eco Church and other related materials. As the materials are available this is now considered completed.

#### **7. 3Generate manifestos update**

*The Conference directs the Methodist Council to:*

- a) ensure the themes in paragraph 26 are included in the work plans of the Connexional Team or other committees or groups as appropriate;*
- b) make information available on the Methodist Church website of the work in progress under each theme; and*

*c) receive an update on these matters no later than April 2017.*

By the time this paper is before the Council, conversations will have been held at the Connexional Leaders' Forum in September 2016, about how the manifestos can be taken forward in Districts. The Council will continue to be updated on this work as it develops.

**8. NOM 2016/205 - Prospects Ministry**

*The Conference:*

*... directs the Methodist Council to ensure that the Connexional Team considers ways in which the Methodist Church can further engage with Prospects and the wider subject of worship that is accessible to people of all abilities.*

The Director of Learning and Development (Pathways) has met with representatives at Prospects where the notice of motion was welcomed as a basis for partnership. Various possibilities for media and communications were discussed including the possibility of hosting resources on the Methodist Church website. Ways for developing a network of trained people to ensure that learning resources might be made available for a variety of ministries and events taking place in the Methodist Church were also discussed, including the possibility of developing a regional roadshow focussed on the theme of Accessible Church. Further to these developments this motion is considered completed.

**\*\*\*RESOLUTION**

**75/1. The Council receives the report.**