

19. District Chairs in Scotland and Shetland Islands

Contact Name and Details	The Revd Jeremy Dare, Chair of the Shetland District The Revd Dr David Easton, Chair of the Scotland District
Status of Paper	Final
Resolutions	See at end of report.

Summary of Content and Impact

Subject and Aims	To present the Conference with a new proposed model for the number of District Chairs and how responsibility could be divided in the Methodist geographical area of Scotland.
Main Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • existing structures and process • rationale for change • proposed new model
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Larger than Circuit</i> Interim report to the Methodist Council January 2015 • <i>Larger than Circuit</i> Report to the Methodist Council April 2015
Consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formed through <i>Larger than Circuit</i> consultation process • Chairs of Scotland and Shetland Districts. • Shetland Synod
Impact	Change in role and number of District Chairs
Risk	Staying with present arrangements would continue to incur the considerable costs associated with the Chair of the Shetland District participating in required connexional meetings. As there are now only two full time ministers stationed in the Shetland Islands the time away from the islands for the present Chair has a significant impact.

19. District Chairs in Scotland and Shetland Islands

1.0 Historical background

- 1.1 The Methodist Church became an active part of life in the Shetland Isles in the 1820s beginning with the ministry of John Nicholson on the West Side. Today there are seventeen churches where worship services are held.

2.0 Existing Structures and Processes

- 2.1 The Shetland Islands form a Circuit and a District within the British Connexion. Including the current Chair of the Shetland District, who is also the circuit Superintendent, there are two full time ministers. There are seven Circuits in the Scotland District, which covers all of Scotland, apart from Shetland. Representatives from all the Circuits attend the Scotland Synod, over which the Chair of the District presides.

- 2.2 The Shetland District shares with the Scotland District:
- Oversight of Safeguarding
 - Learning and Development
 - District Candidates Committee
 - Representation to World Church Forum and Rural Chairs Group.

- 2.3 The Chair attends:
- the Conference annually
 - Connexional Leaders' Forum (CLF) three times each year
 - District Chairs' Meetings 4 times each year (linked to the Conference or CLF)
 - Regional Chairs' Meeting annually
 - Stationing Matching Group
 - Chairs' Retreat three days every other year.

- 2.4 Shetland sends a representative to:
- The Methodist Council
 - Resourcing Mission Forum
- Representation at the Conference is shared between the Shetland District and the Scotland District, with the Districts themselves determining how they fill the annual allocation of seats as agreed by the Conference.

3.0 Rationale for change

- 3.1 The *Larger than Circuit* process has provided the opportunity to consider alternative structures for the existing Districts in the Methodist Church, and also the role of a District Chair. This process has included looking at the current structural make up of the Scotland and Shetland Districts. Due to the current number of churches and the geographical location, a proposed new model is presented to the Conference which is hoped to be more suitable for the existing Methodist Circuits and churches 'north of the border'. The main change being that a single chair is responsible for both Scotland and Shetland Districts, with a deputy to the chair of the Shetland District, using the title 'Deputy Chair' for Shetland having a smaller number of responsibilities. The Shetland Islands would remain a separate District.
- 3.2 Maintaining the status quo would continue to incur the considerable costs associated with the Shetland Chair participating in required connexional meetings. As there are now only two full time ministers stationed in the Shetland Islands the time away from the islands for the present Chair has a significant impact.

4.0 Proposed new arrangements

4.1 The following model is proposed to the Conference:

- Shetland remains a distinct District
- The Chair of the Scotland District becomes also the Chair of the Shetland District
- The Shetland Superintendent becomes a Deputy Chair
- The Shetland Synod/Circuit Meeting would be normally convened and chaired by the Deputy Chair, and may be chaired by the Chair if a visit to the island coincided with the meeting.

As the Shetland Superintendent would also be the Deputy Chair, it is recommended that this post be advertised in the same way as other District Chair posts. This would allow for additional input from the Shetland District and the wider Connexion in the appointment process, prior to stationing by the Conference. An amendment to Standing Orders to give effect to this is set out in the resolutions.

4.2 The Deputy Chair would attend the Scotland District Ministers Retreat annually.

4.3 The Chair of Scotland and Shetland Districts would represent both Districts at

- Stationing Matching Group
- Chairs' Meetings
- Connexional Leaders' Forum
- he/she would visit Shetland at least once or twice each year, especially when a new minister was being sought. His/her visit would include the annual Presbyteral Synod meeting.

4.4 Shetland would retain a seat:

- On the Resourcing Mission Forum
 - On the Methodist Council
- The existing practice of determining how the two Districts share the allocation of seats at the Conference would continue.

4.5 When a lay person represents the Shetland District on the Methodist Council, the Synod would be invited to elect the Deputy Chair to be a representative at the Conference and vice versa. The cost of the Chair's travel between the mainland and Shetland shall be a charge upon the Methodist Church Fund.

5.0 Standing Order implications

Standing Order amendments to effect these changes are shown below in resolution 2.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

19/1. The Conference agreed to the changes to the number of Chairs in the Scotland and Shetland Districts as set out in the Report, to take effect from 1 September 2016.

19/2. The Conference amended Standing Order 427 as set out below:

427 Scotland. (1) The Scotland District may also be known as the Methodist Church in Scotland.

(2) The Chair of the Scotland District may be known as the Chair of the Methodist Church in Scotland. ~~The Chairs of the Scotland and Shetland Districts shall consult regularly over joint matters as appropriate.~~

(3) (i) The same person shall be appointed concurrently as Chair of the Scotland District and Chair of the Shetland District.

(ii) There shall be a deputy to the Chair of the Shetland District within the terms of Standing Order 426, except that only clauses (2)(i) and (iv) and (4) of that Standing Order shall apply. The deputy to the Chair shall also be the Superintendent of the Shetland Circuit.

(iii) The deputy to the Chair shall on a new appointment be nominated by a process that follows as closely as is practicable that set out in SO 423. The Synod shall vote on the nomination of the nomination committee and the appointment shall be included in the stations in the same way as an appointment to a Circuit and no separate resolution of appointment by the Conference shall be required. For the purposes of Standing Orders 544 and 545 the deputy to the Chair shall be deemed to have been invited to the Shetland Circuit as Superintendent.

(4) Nothing in this Standing Order shall derogate from the ultimate authority of the Conference over stationing annually.

19/3. The Conference directed that the amendments set out in Resolution 19/2 shall take effect from 1 September 2016, save that they shall have immediate effect so far as may be required to enable appointments to be made taking effect on or after that date or to enable preparations to be made for such appointments.

Note: The changes proposed in Resolution 19/2 will require some consequential changes to SO 545. These will be printed in part two of the Law and Polity Committee's report which will be in volume two of the Agenda.