

Epworth Press: Transitional and Future Arrangements

Basic Information

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Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	Confirmation
Draft Resolution	The Council notes and approves the action taken by the SRC
Alternative Options to Consider, if Any	

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	Notes of Implementation Group established in line with SRC Minute 09.2.8 and paper SRC/09/25
Main Points	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rehearsing of already approved parameters and headlines of statement of purpose. 2. Outline of governance and management structure
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	SRC Minute 09.2.8 and paper SRC/09/25; SRC Minutes of meeting September 09
Consultations	The point of the Implementation Group was to bring the interested (in the technical sense) parties together.

Summary of Impact

Standing Orders	Will require revision of SO 243
Faith and Order	n/a
Financial	Budget provision will be required
Personnel	Process set up that will lead to identifying needs
Legal	Entity and/or officers will have to be capable of entering contracts with authors etc
Wider Connexional	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	
Risk	

EPWORTH PRESS: TRANSITIONAL AND FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

A. Introduction

1. An Implementation Group has been established to set up transitional and future arrangements for the management and oversight of the Epworth Press following the decisions now that mph no longer exists as a separate entity. The group consists of Ken Wales and Ian Harrison (SRC); Martin Wellings, Angela Shier-Jones and Michael Townsend (Editorial Committee); Ken Howcroft (Assistant Secretary of the Conference); and Victoria Hill (Methodist Publishing Transition Manager in the Connexional Team).

The meeting of SRC in August 2009 received a report of a meeting of the Implementation Group and of subsequent work and discussions, and approved the following report for submission to the Council. The proposals and recommendations set out below are welcomed and approved by the Epworth Press Editorial Committee and the SRC.

B. Affirmations

1. Conference has confirmed its desire to continue publishing material under the imprint of Epworth Press ie the question of whether Epworth Press should exist at all is not in doubt in the short term
2. The role of Epworth Press is to publish books and other publications which contribute to the advance of theological, biblical, historical and related studies or are generally of an educational nature. In doing so it encourages scholarship and theological reflection about British and World Methodism, nurtures British Methodist scholars and enables the Methodist Church in Britain to contribute to ecumenical and public scholarship and debate. This in turn can be seen as a commitment to sustain theological publishing within the framework of *Our Calling* and the *Priorities*.
3. The Epworth Press Editorial Committee shall report to the Methodist Council and be responsible for selecting titles for publication under the Epworth Press imprint, subject to available finance within the budgets authorised by the Methodist Council on behalf of the Conference.
4. The Epworth Press Editorial Committee should continue to have editorial independence but that does not mean it should be autonomous from a governance perspective. What the new governance arrangements look like in practice is still to be confirmed (a proposal to reflect the current thinking is set out below).
5. Epworth Press has a good reputation in the field of Biblical Studies and has published award winning books. It has been moving more towards the field of academic theology but doesn't have a hold on this market yet.
6. The theological publishing market has changed considerably over the past 5 -10 years due to consolidation and the introduction of Print on Demand. We are now, to some extent, a competitor of our current publishing partner – Hymns Ancient and Modern (which includes Canterbury Press and SCM press).

7. The existing mechanism for commissioning books – via the Editorial Committee - functions effectively. The areas where skills are lacking are financial management, production and marketing. There is limited financial management at the moment; production and marketing are handled by Hymns Ancient and Modern
8. Hymns Ancient and Modern are probably not doing as much as they could for us at the moment eg they could be moving more titles on to Print on Demand, but the account is not being actively managed so they are not entirely at fault. They have expressed a wish to maintain and develop the relationship and should still be considered an active contender for the new contract. Epworth Press has an outstanding debt of £60k with HA&M, this is likely to rise to £80k by the financial year end.

C. Recommendations and actions

1. Proposed structure for governance and management

Group	Role	Membership
Strategy and Resources Committee	Scrutinises the Epworth Press Budget, Publications and Marketing Plan following the same process as the rest of the Council budget	As currently exists
Epworth Press Reference Group	<p>Creates the Budget and Marketing Plan</p> <p>Manages the finances within the agreed budget</p> <p>Manages the production and marketing of titles through a 3rd party supplier</p> <p>Authorises publication of individual titles</p> <p>Line manages the Commissioning Editor</p>	<p>Representatives from the Epworth Press Editorial Committee x 2</p> <p>Representatives from the Connexional Team (Methodist Publishing) x 2</p> <p>An individual with commercial publishing experience from the wider Connexion (<i>Chair</i>)</p> <p>To be appointed by Council</p>
<p>Epworth Press Editorial Committee</p> <p>The recent review of Connexional Committees has clarified the scope of Committees and other governance groups. Under the new definitions the Editorial Committee would be classed as a Resource Group.</p> <p>Suggested new title for the Epworth Press Editorial Committee is "Epworth Press Editorial Board"</p>	<p>Creates the publishing plan</p> <p>Assesses book proposals and makes recommendations to the Reference Group</p>	As currently exists

2. Recruit a publishing executive as a voluntary and interim post to support Angela as Commissioning Editor. VH has met with ASJ to handover a task list for next 2-3 months and get recommendations for Commissioning Editor Job description
3. It has been agreed that £30k of the outstanding balance to SCM should be repaid from MPH transition budget before the year end.
4. The stakeholders have been consulted

- a. Editorial Committee

"The editorial committee was pleased to give its endorsement to the two suggestions brought forward by the implementation group: (1) the appointment of a publishing executive as a voluntary and interim post to support Angela as Commissioning Editor from September 2009 and (2) the proposed structure of governance and management with SRC setting a budget, reference group advising on finance, marketing etc and the editorial committee assessing book proposals.

The committee was also very glad to hear of the commitment to sustain theological publishing within the framework of Our Calling and the Priorities, and expressed its gratitude for all the work that is being done"

- b. Connexional Team: Discussions have been held between KH, VH and John Ellis and Janet Morley (Head of the Christian Communications, Evangelism and Advocacy cluster). The Team have agreed to the suggested governance and management structure
5. Balance sheet for Epworth Press. At the end of April 2009 Epworth owed Hymns Ancient and Modern £60k and owned stock, held at Hymns Ancient and Modern with a value (if valued at average sale price over the last 2 years) of £120k. It's safe to assume that most of this stock would have to be heavily discounted to clear it and so the actual value is likely to be significantly less than £120k. Epworth Press is likely to require funding from Council of the order £30 - £50k in 2009/10.
6. The Council will appoint the Chair of the proposed Reference Group.