

### Introduction

The enactment of the General Data Protection Regulations in 2018 raised many questions for those responsible for compiling, publishing and distributing Circuit Plans. The following guidance has been offered by the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP).

### A question frequently asked is:

***Do we need consent to produce the Preaching Plan (the 'Plan') and can we share this with third parties?***

### The response from TMCP is:

No. You do not need consent to 'produce' the Plan as these are required to record the appointments Local Preachers have committed to in accordance with their duties under Standing Order 563.

It is a legitimate interest of the Methodist Church for the contact details of Local Preachers to be listed on the Plan so that members of the Local Preacher's Meeting can communicate with one another, for example to substitute their appointments where they are unable to preach in accordance with Standing Order 563(2)(vi).

Local Preachers are also expected to participate in a programme of continuing local preacher development under Standing Order 563(3)(iii). The Plan and record data is used by the Districts, regional learning & development teams and the Local Preachers Office within the Connexional Team so that they can identify where certain training provisions and needs lie but also so they can keep the current approved Methodist Council training programme up to date and relevant.

The Plans used by the Circuit Local Preachers Meeting, District Local Preachers Officers and the Connexional Local Preachers Office is a legitimate interest of the Methodist Church in order to fulfil their functions under section 56 of Standing Orders. These elements of the Methodist Church are all 'members' of the Methodist Church, answerable to Conference, and therefore for the purposes of Article 9(d) of GDPR does not breach any data sharing restrictions.

However, where the Plans are made public by leaving them in local church vestibules etc, control over Local Preachers' personal data is lost and therefore consent is required from all such Local Preachers who are not in full Connexion. It must be made clear that consent is not being obtained to 'produce' the Plan, but to make the Plan 'public'.

This often results in mixed views across the Connexion and a solution found by several Circuits is to produce two Plans:

- a) One which is for internal Methodist use only and which contains all contact details etc.
- b) Another which is limited to name only, preferably Christian name and an initial for the surname, which is made available to the general members of the public.

This solution, now used by several Circuits, satisfies the Connexional needs of the Methodist Church by allowing the data to be shared within the Methodist family in order to fulfil the duties and the ongoing development of our Local Preachers as well as continuing to be the 'open' church by allowing members of the public to see the preaching appointments.

The above guidance was provided by TMCP on 28/11/2018. Please check their website at <https://www.tmcp.org.uk/about/data-protection> for further guidance and FAQs relating to GDPR.

Please contact the Local Preachers' Office at [localpreacher@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:localpreacher@methodistchurch.org.uk) for further information regarding Local Preachers and Worship Leaders.

Please contact TMCP at [tmcp@tmcp.org.uk](mailto:tmcp@tmcp.org.uk) for information regarding GDPR and its application within the Methodist Church.