

***Our Calling* Methodist Council Objectives**

<b>Contact Name and Details</b>	Doug Swanney, Connexional Secretary, <a href="mailto:swanneyd@methodistchurch.org.uk">swanneyd@methodistchurch.org.uk</a>
<b>Status of Paper</b>	Final
<b>Action Required</b>	To Note
<b>Resolution</b>	<b>64/1. The Council receives the report.</b>

**Summary of Content**

<b>Subject and Aims</b>	To present the Council with updates on work undertaken towards the priority areas identified by the Council in support of the objectives.
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## **Our Calling: Methodist Council Objectives**

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**The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission**

Over the last two years the Conference and the Council has worked on ensuring that *Our Calling* is kept before all its work as the main strategic driver for our decision-making and resource allocation.

The statement was further developed into eight areas of work where the Council recognised there was a task of work to do for which it was responsible. These main tasks are contained below and serve as a reminder for the Council as it undertakes its work in the new connexional year.

### **Worship – increase the awareness of God’s presence and celebrate God’s love**

<b>1. Proclaiming the Gospel through worship</b>
<b>The Council’s task:</b> to consider how best to enable every act of worship conducted in the name of the Methodist Church to give honour to God through excellence, creativity, prayerful contemplation and encompassing a variety of spiritualities.
<b>2. The ministry of the whole people of God in the life of the world</b>
<b>The Council’s task:</b> to have a clear articulation of the Church’s engagement with God’s mission and therefore to ensure there are ministers, local preachers and lay leaders of the required gifts and qualities for that mission and that they are effectively deployed. Enabling all people to discern and utilise their gifts in responding to <i>Our Calling</i> .

### **Learning and Caring – help people to grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care**

<b>3. Resources for the Church: the use of God’s gifts</b>
<b>The Council’s task:</b> to use the resources of the Church to support Districts, Circuits and churches to be most effective in their mission, by provide cost-effective connexional specialist services and relevant local resources
<b>4. Oversight and Leadership</b>
<b>The Council’s task:</b> to operate the oversight/leadership functions of the Methodist Church as effectively as possible in pursuit of the Church’s mission ensuring the most appropriate use of resources.

### **Service – be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice**

<b>5. A Church for all people</b>
<b>The Council’s task:</b> to be an inclusive and diverse Church by extending our reach and engagement with those who feel marginalized, ensuring that all feel enabled to participate.
<b>6. Social Holiness</b>
<b>The Council’s task:</b> to resource work and programmes which transform our society and communities to embody the Kingdom of God through living out our social holiness; offering loving acts of justice and service to all and challenging injustice wherever we see it.

## Evangelism: Making more followers of Jesus Christ

<b>7. Evangelism</b>
<b>The Council's task:</b> to equip and give confidence to the Methodist people to share the Gospel of Christ with those in our local communities so as to lead people to making a personal commitment to Christ.
<b>8. One Mission</b>
<p><b>The Council's task:</b> to be celebrating and playing a full part in the global community of Methodists (eg the World Methodist Council and European Methodist Council) for the sake of transformation of the world through the sharing of the gospel, and being a confident Church acting prophetically in our own Connexion with ecumenical and other partners.</p> <p>A world transformed by God's love;  A confident Church motivated to share God's love;  A people celebrating being part of a worldwide family.</p> <p>[Vision Statement for Mission, adopted by the 2012 Conference DR 3/16]</p>

At its meeting in April 2019. the Council received MC/19/30 which offered updates on some of the specific priorities that had been identified related to the tasks above. Work has continued on these priority areas and the following updates are offered:

### Worship – increase the awareness of God's presence and celebrate God's love

<b>1. Proclaiming the Gospel through worship</b>	
<b>The Council's task:</b> to consider how best to enable every act of worship conducted in the name of the Methodist Church to give honour to God through excellence, creativity, prayerful contemplation and encompassing a variety of spiritualities.	
<b>Therefore the Council will aim:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) To support and enable local preachers and ministers to lead high quality, engaging, authentic, contextual worship around the Connexion.</li> <li>b) To ensure the support and training is offered to resource local arrangements appropriately.</li> </ul>	
<b>With the following as immediate priorities:</b>	<b>Update</b>
To continue to refine the Worship: Leading and Preaching course – including addressing issues around online mode of delivery and appropriateness for Worship Leaders.	The course has been amended so that Worship Leaders can take a context-based route - or can follow the "gold standard" route which leads to a certification at the end of module 4.
To determine what support and ongoing training may be needed for the large number of supernumeraries leading worship.	Creation of a whole suite of pages for supernumeraries on the website is underway. This does not yet cover worship development.
To have agreed a mandatory Continuing Development package for Local Preachers.	This has been developed over the past year. Resources for Continuing Local Preacher Development will be uploaded over the coming months. Children, Youth & Family are piloting an annual young local preachers event for those aged 16+.
To support development in ministerial training pilots.	The Ministries Committee has decided that this is not something on which further work is immediately possible or desirable. The Ministries Team is continuing to explore flexible pathways into and through initial ministerial formation.

## 2. The ministry of the whole people of God in the life of the world

**The Council's task:** to have a clear articulation of the Church's engagement with God's mission and therefore to ensure there are ministers, local preachers and lay leaders of the required gifts and qualities for that mission and that they are effectively deployed. Enabling all people to discern and utilise their gifts in responding to *Our Calling*.

### Therefore the Council will aim:

- a) To have embedded an ethos of whole life, life long and life changing discipleship across the Connexion where a mutual respect of the vocations of lay and ordained flourish.
- b) To achieve an increase in vocations to ordained ministry, compared to 2016 through the opening up of exploration and training opportunities.
- c) To have in place processes to identify and train ministers who are missional, adaptable and collaborative, and able to lead the Church in the 2020s, 2030s and beyond.
- d) To have built on initial developments to offer a broad support package for lay workers and ensure they are deployed effectively in Circuits as well as nurture people into lay ministry roles,
- e) To implement a more effective and strategic connexional approach for the deployment of ordained ministers including the creating and ending of appointments.
- f) To have inculcated a commitment to accountable discipleship for all Methodist people as a Methodist Way of Life.
- g) To ensure young people are part of strategies to participate in the development of vocations for the age we live in.

With the following as immediate priorities:	Update
To implement a strategy for an increased response to vocational discernment, including the diversity of those engaging in our processes.	Work has begun. Setting up meetings with key stakeholders and others (including exploring partnership with Saltley Trust and London District). Beginning conversations with The Queens Foundation, Cliff College and the Faith and Order Committee to develop sound basis to develop materials for Advocates. A Vocations Adviser has been appointed to the Connexional Team.
To grow the number of opportunities for vocational exploration.	Rise & Shine event to evolve into Young People's Vocational Exploration event. 18-30s candidate exploration event going ahead with good numbers signed up. Development of prospectus with details of all vocational opportunities for young adults. Research into the reasons that some members have not candidated has been completed and is being made widely available.
To re-invigorate the understanding of the possibilities of offering for presbyteral ministry in a local appointment.	Research outcomes on the ministry of those who served in the former category of MLA have been considered by the September Ministries Committee.
To establish the mandatory training of superintendents to ensure they are equipped for leadership at circuit level.	A leadership programme has been drafted which is being worked into a new Continuing Development in Ministry strategy so that this all might weave together.
To continue to resource the accountable supervision of those in ministry appropriately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial supervisor training has now been provided for all those nominated by districts. 447 people have been trained and 199 people have so far been approved.</li> <li>• Continuing development sessions for supervisors are now being planned through regional training forums.</li> <li>• Further professional development in supervision has been offered to 11 people</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision is already completely implemented in seven districts. A further eleven districts are now briefing supervisees for beginning to be supervised and roll out will happen in the next couple of months.</li> <li>• Wider research into the implementation of supervision that is both quantitative and qualitative is now underway.</li> </ul>
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**Learning and Caring – help people to grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care**

<b>3. Resources for the Church: the use of God’s gifts</b>	
<b>The Council’s task:</b> to use the resources of the Church to support Districts, Circuits and churches to be most effective in their mission, by provide cost-effective connexional specialist services and relevant local resources	
<b>Therefore the Council will aim:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) To support the embedding of <i>Our Calling</i> in every aspect of the life of the Church enabling us all to make focused decisions.</li> <li>b) To have an effective suite of shared services for Districts, building on established services and having introduced new ones in response to demand (to include Property, Finance and other areas).</li> <li>c) To have in place a financial strategy which <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Is working towards a significant reduction in the assessment for local churches as income is drawn from other sources</li> <li>(ii) Enables a greater sharing of resources</li> </ul> </li> <li>d) To consider how Districts can more effectively be resourced and the connexional principle of support articulated, and where managing trusteeship of Local Churches and Circuits should most effectively reside.</li> </ul>	
<b>With the following as immediate priorities:</b>	<b>Update:</b>
To implement the property strategy and the finance strategy approved by the Council.	‘Mission Planning Toolkit’ on the Evangelism & Growth pages has been connected with the ‘Starting a new property project’ page in the Property section and this is now live. The mission planning framework asks specific, probing questions about property needs.
To oversee the Methodist Church House re-development project ensuring the process is shaped for the new building to be utilised to support the aims of the Methodist Church.	Proposals to redevelop Methodist Church house are steadily progressing. The focus since April to date has been with procuring a team of consultants with the relevant experience and capacity to deliver the project. Design work will commence in earnest at the end of September 2019, with submission of a planning application anticipated in May 2020 and a planning decision in October 2020. The build contract is currently scheduled to be let by May 2021 with completion of construction works by April 2023. The Connexional Team will decant to temporary alternative premises during construction of the new building.
<b>4. Oversight and Leadership</b>	
<b>The Council’s task:</b> to operate the oversight/leadership functions of the Methodist Church as effectively as possible in pursuit of the Church’s mission ensuring the most appropriate use of resources.	

<p><b>Therefore the Council will aim:</b></p> <p>a) To have refined patterns of oversight/leadership and governance so as to provide high-quality, priority-driven policy-making to deliver <i>Our Calling</i> as the discerned manifestation of the Church's mission.</p> <p>b) To ensure that Ministerial Development Review (MDR) and supervision processes are embedded in the life of the Church for all in the active ministry.</p>	
<p><b>With the following as immediate priorities:</b></p>	<p><b>Update</b></p>
<p>To ensure the ways of working of the Council, the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC), the Chairs' Meeting and the Connexional Leaders' Forum (CLF) are fit to deliver the aim of 'having refined patterns of oversight/leadership and governance so as to provide high-quality, priority-driven policy-making to deliver <i>Our Calling</i> as the discerned manifestation of the Church's mission.'</p>	<p>Following workshops at the Conference which were based on the discussions of the CLF, SRC and Council, a further time of reflection will happen at the CLF in September 2019. It is hoped that this will establish some principles which can be offered to the Council as it meets this year.</p>

**Service – be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice**

<p><b>5. A Church for all people</b></p>	
<p><b>The Council's task:</b> to be an inclusive and diverse Church by extending our reach and engagement with those who feel marginalized, ensuring that all feel protected to be able to participate.</p>	
<p><b>Therefore the Council will aim:</b></p> <p>a) For every District/Circuit to have a contextual strategy (which is both intentional and inclusive) for engagement which enables it to experience God's grace and people to share experiences with the whole Connexion.</p> <p>b) To be a Church which is present lovingly serving the areas in most need.</p> <p>c) To ensure all people are safe in the Church and communities we seek to serve.</p>	
<p><b>With the following as immediate priorities:</b></p>	<p><b>Update</b></p>
<p>To develop a strategy for evangelism and discipleship for those less well served by reason of race or class – including taking forward the work of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee in relation to 'The Unfinished Agenda'.</p>	<p>The emerging Evangelism &amp; Growth strategy consists of 9 streams, one of which is 'church for all' and another 'church of the poor'. There is a clear commitment to diversity and a bias to the poor fundamental to the strategy which was workshopped at the Conference.</p>
<p>To continue with the growth of 3Generate as a significant engagement in the discipleship journey of children and young people, paying particular attention to those places where young people are most excluded. This will include encouragement of the Year of Testimony initiative.</p>	<p>Work is underway to increase the capacity of 3Generate with a larger venue to continue growing the event through to 2022 and to engage more young people in shaping the programme and delivery of 3Generate.</p> <p>A tailored young adult venue is being created to encourage their engagement.</p> <p>Leaders information days are being revised and a session plan being provided to help them prepare children and young people coming to the event.</p> <p>Work is being done to grow accessibility and provision for those with additional needs</p> <p>Mental health first aiders will be present during the weekend.</p>

	Inclusion and diversity will be kept at the top of the agenda in all strategic development, such as providing gender neutral toilet facilities from 2020.
To encourage churches, Circuits and Districts to engage with the Marriage and Relationships consultation process.	There are plans to host a facilitated session at 3Generate to enable young people to join the Marriage and Relationships conversation. The Report, a <i>Study Guide</i> with questions to prompt conversation, and a supporting film featuring the Task Group were made available online at the end of August 2019. These were all also provided in printed form for Synods and all ministers in the active work, and thereafter made available to the Connexion via the Methodist Publishing website. In addition, resources are provided online only to set the consultation in the context of worship, to help group leaders facilitate discussions of the Report, including encouraging the contribution of young people, and to guide individuals in prayerful reflection on the Report: <a href="https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/marriage-and-relationships-2019/">https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/marriage-and-relationships-2019/</a>
<b>6. Social Holiness</b>	
<b>The Council's task:</b> to resource work and programmes which then transform our society and communities to embody the Kingdom of God through living out our social holiness; offering loving acts of justice and service to all and challenging injustice wherever we see it.	
<b>Therefore the Council will aim:</b>	
a) To have resourced ways for Circuits and Districts to be a significant voice and proactive participant in communities throughout the Connexion; working with others to bring transformation for the sake of the Gospel. This includes our ongoing work to challenge injustice by engaging on public issues for the sake of the whole community.	
<b>With the following as immediate priorities:</b>	<b>Update</b>
To commit to a key number of issues where we want to act as a prophetic voice.	An ecumenical statement and letter raising concerns about the impact of a No Deal Brexit on the poorest in society was coordinated. The government accepted the Net Zero by 2050 target, a campaign target of Churches and others. The campaign to <i>Lift the Ban</i> on asylum seekers working was coordinated, with hundreds of postcards signed at and after Methodist Conference. A change was achieved to the Department of Work and Pensions website to remove "stripclub assistant" and "dancing for adult entertainment" as appropriate job opportunities for people on Universal Credit. TV and radio coverage has been achieved, covering Universal Credit, including the provision of childcare during the summer.
For the Committees of the Council and the Connexional Team to strengthen their engagement with MHA, Action for Children and All We Can; remembering their heritage but also our shared hope in a brave new world.	The internship programme has intentionally formed relationships, creating and placing interns with all three organisations. An intergenerational project has been piloted that links youth groups with MHA homes and live at home schemes. Ways are being explored of engaging children and young people in Action for Children's 'Choose Childhood' campaign. All We Can are participating in 3Generate, supporting the Agents of Change agenda. A shared pack has been created,

	coordinated by All We Can, encouraging legacy giving to the Methodist Church and 'family' of associated organisations. It is planned that each of these partner organisations will systematically promote their activities and impact through the <i>connexion</i> magazine, beginning with the All We Can Christmas 'Extraordinary gifts' campaign.
To ensure our Grants processes (particularly Mission in Britain Grants and Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice (MAPJ) Grants) enable work in the hardest to reach places.	The Connexional Grants Committee's revised objectives for grant making in Britain have been implemented for 2019/2020 to prioritise evangelism and service. This is supported by a single new application form and online guidance documents. The processing of applications has been streamlined by combining the assessment 'streams'. The new priorities have enabled a greater focus on MAPJ grants, which has been a key funding area since 2016. This is now enshrined in this description that was presented to the Council in April 2019 and features on the application form: 'd) To transform societies and communities by reaching and empowering people experiencing poverty and inequality of resources whether in an urban or rural setting.' In 2018/19 MAPJ grants of £828,000 were awarded, this compares to just over £1 million in 2017/18. However, due to a reduction in the overall budget for Mission and Ministry in Britain grants, awards to MAPJ projects have increased from 18% to 21% of the total value of grants awarded.

### Evangelism: Making more followers of Jesus Christ

7. Evangelism	
<b>The Council's task:</b> to equip and give confidence to the Methodist people to share the Gospel of Christ with those in our local communities so as to lead people to making a personal commitment to Christ.	
<b>Therefore the Council will aim:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) To have made decisions which have contributed towards the priority of having halted the fall in numbers of Methodist worshippers in our Districts (reducing the rate of decline in membership).</li> <li>b) To have developed the mechanisms to further embed 'Fresh Expressions' as important components in contextual missional engagement.</li> <li>c) To have concentrated resources where we are, or can be strong, accepting this means we will not be present in all places.</li> </ul>	
With the following as Immediate Priorities:	Update
To have provided the resources and momentum for Districts to establish credible strategies for growth and increased evangelism	The Evangelism & Growth Team of 10 people - including 3 new team members who joined in March and April – is now in place and beginning to be well established. The writing of the Evangelism & Growth strategy is well underway and was shared in workshops at the Conference. An Evangelism & Growth Consultation is planned for 19 October at Central Hall, Westminster at which 250+ people will workshop strategy.
Each church, Circuit and District to have in place a 'Mission Plan' to underpin the future direction of work, including deployment of personnel and use of reserves.	Most districts have submitted a mission plan of one kind or another. Four have mission plans in progress and five have submitted a plan which needs further work. Planning is underway for pilots in 2019/20 to train, enthuse, and build energy and skills for mission planning.

To evaluate gaps in our apologetic resources to ensure the Church has access to the best resources possible.	Evaluation and editing of the resources available on the Evangelism & Growth section of the website is underway.
<b>8. One Mission</b>	
<p><b>The Council's task:</b> to be celebrating and playing a full part in the global community of Methodists (eg the World Methodist Council and European Methodist Council) for the sake of transformation of the world through the sharing of the gospel, and being a confident Church acting prophetically in our own Connexion with ecumenical and other partners.</p> <p>A world transformed by God's love;  A confident Church motivated to share God's love;  A people celebrating being part of a worldwide family.</p> <p>[Vision Statement for Mission, adopted by the 2012 Conference DR 3/16]</p>	
<p><b>Therefore the Council will aim:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) To ensure that the Mission in Britain Fund and the World Mission Fund are both serving the needs of local communities and global partners.</li> <li>b) To be more aware in all the work of the Council of the variety of languages and cultures that make up our own Church.</li> <li>c) To have worked with partners such as All We Can to build capacity in partner churches around the world.</li> </ol>	
<b>With the following as immediate priorities:</b>	<b>Update</b>
To ensure the One Mission Forum as a place of sharing and encouragement for all the Districts.	<p>With the decision to replace the work of the Forum with District Roadshows, the Global Relationships Team will participate in the Mission Consultation Day on October 5<sup>th</sup> in co-operation with All We Can and alongside others in the Mission Team. This will be an important event to express gratitude to those who have served on the Forum and to enthuse and inform about mission them as they return to their Districts.</p> <p>Global Relationships and All We Can will be leading a workshop on partnership and mutuality in mission.</p> <p>On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, a pilot District Roadshow will be held in Cornwall.</p>
To continue to realise and grow the Strategy for Global Relationships.	<p>Capacity building through Church Can is developing well, with new partners engaging in this process. A separate grant to the Methodist Church in Portugal has been pledged to help in their capacity development.</p> <p>Grants have been pledged to The Queen's Foundation, Cliff College and Wesley House to facilitate capacity building programmes with global partners in education. People to People Programmes have seen two Global Mission Fellows come to serve with Methodist Church Britain, successful Encounter Worldwide programmes to India and Argentina, an Encounter Together Visit to Haiti and facilitating appropriate short-term skills-based service overseas during sabbaticals.</p> <p>The implementation of the Mission Partner Review has begun. We currently have five candidates for service overseas at various stages of the process.</p>
Continued work to ensure the 'Fellowship Groups' are understood as a modern day expressions of societies of the Methodist Church and support them accordingly	Fellowships and the wider issue of how we best relate to partner churches whose members are living and worshipping in another country were discussed at the World Methodist Council conference on the Diaspora in June.

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This represents a considerable amount of work and progress towards achieving the Council's objectives. It has been helped by changes in the structure of the Team so that the twin focus on Mission and Ministries enables the resources of the Team to be effectively deployed as churches. Circuits and Districts set and to meet their own objectives.

Whilst the work outlined above responds to the four elements of *Our Calling*, we do not lose sight of the overarching purpose of the Church – to respond to the Good News of God's love. Effectively to do that will require more structural change and the Council will receive a report from the Connexional Leaders' Forum proposing principles and timescales for that work.

**\*\*\*RESOLUTION**

**64/1. The Council receives the report.**