

Minutes of a meeting of the Methodist Council held on 30 March 2020 via video conferencing

Present: The President, the Vice-President and 45 voting members as follows:
Mrs E Jill Baker, Mr Tim Baker, the Revd Paul H Booth, Ms Roxanne Bromley, the Revd Dr Adrian Burdon, Mr David Burton, the Revd Linda J Catlow, Ms Sue Draper, Mrs Aileen Fox, the Revd Dr Andrew Fox, the Revd Ruth M Gee, Mr Bala Gnanapragasam, the Revd Jeremy H A Hackett, the Revd Novette S Headley, the Revd Beverly Hollings, the Revd Dr Jonathan R Hustler, the Revd Dr Vincent Jambawo, the Revd Philip J Jackson, the Revd Ermal Kirby, Mrs Carolyn Lawrence, Mrs Heather Lovelady, Mr Andrew Lowe, Deacon Karen McBride, Mr Alister McClure, Professor David Matthews, Deacon Jonathan Miller, Dr Daleep S Mukarji, the Revd Gillian M Newton, the Revd Leslie M Newton, Mrs Helen Norton, the Revd Richard Ormrod, the Revd Rachel E Parkinson, the Revd Mary M Patterson, the Revd Stephen J Poxon, Mr Peter Prescott, Mrs Anne Pryke, Mr Michael Pryke, Mr Graham Russell, the Revd Billy Slatter, Mr Doug Swanney, the Revd Timothy A Swindell, the Revd Richard J Teal, Miss Margaret Webber, Mr Richard Wills, the Revd Dr Jongikaya Zihle.

Apologies: The Revd Mark Dunn-Wilson, the Revd David W Hookins, the Revd Dr Jennifer A Hurd, Professor Ken Mortimer, the Revd Michael Parker, the Revd Malcolm Peacock, the Revd Michaela A Youngson.

Substitute: The Revd Helen D Cameron.

Observers: Ms Thelma Commey (Youth President), Mr Richard Hood (interim General Counsel and Company Secretary), Ms Jude Levermore (Head of Mission), the Revd Dr Nicola Price-Tebbutt (Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee), Mr Matthew Tattersall (Director of Finance and Resources), the Revd D Paul Wood (interim Head of Ministries).

Apologies were also received from the following non-voting members:

Mr Ted Awty (Connexional Treasurer), Mr Peter Pay (the United Reformed Church), the Revd Dr Andrew D Wood (Head of Ministries)

Letter: The Council sent a letter of greeting and concern to Mr Bevan Powell (EDI Adviser in the Connexional Team).

20.2.1 Minutes of the Methodist Council held in January

The minutes of the meeting held on 29-30 January 2020 were approved as a correct record.

20.2.2 Nomination of the Assistant Secretary of the Conference [MC/20/33]

33/1. *The Council received the report.*

33/2. *In accordance with Standing Orders 116A and 313 the Council agreed to nominate to the Conference the Revd Ruth M Gee to serve as Assistant Secretary of the Conference for the year 2020/2021.*

33/3. *The Council approved the process and timetable for nominating the Assistant Secretary of the Conference from 2021, as described in the report.*

20.2.3 Nomination of the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice [MC/20/67]

67/1. *In accordance with Standing Orders 116C and 314 the Council agreed to nominate to the Conference Joanne Anderton to serve as Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice.*

20.2.4 Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes – service level agreement [MC/20/34]

34/1. *The Council received the report.*

34/2. The Council adopted the Service Level Partnership Agreement as set out.

34/3. The Council delegated authority to two members of the Strategy and Resources Committee to sign off the document's annexes, in consultation with the Interim General Counsel / Company Secretary.

The Council noted that there is ongoing work to be done, and that there may be further revisions to the document in the light of that work.

20.2.5 Connexional Team update [MC/20/35]

35/1. The Council noted the update from the Connexional Team.

The Council expressed its thanks to the Connexional Team, particularly in the current circumstances.

20.2.6 Council objectives [MC/20/36]

36/1. The Council received the report.

20.2.7 Loss of earnings provision – the Conference [MC/20/37]

37/1. The Council received the report.

37/2. The Council approved the change in policy regarding loss of earnings provision for members of the Conference and directs that the change in Standing Order is brought to the Conference.

20.2.8 M5 (2019) amendment of SO 931(5)(i) [MC/20/46]

46/1. The Council received the report.

46/2. The Council agreed to report to the Conference that it has considered the issues raised and, given that the current position provides for issuing notices but for obtaining Connexional Team consent for litigation, recommends that there be no change to the current position.

20.2.9 M12 (2019) Substitute District Chair [MC/20/47]

47/1. The Council receives the report.

47/2. The Council adopted the proposals set out in the report and commends the report to the Conference as the further reply to M12 (2019).

20.2.10 Methodist Schools Committee [MC/20/49]

49/1. The Council received the report.

20.2.11 Wesley Trust merger with Acorn Trust [MC/20/50]

50/1. The Council received the report.

50/2. The Council endorsed the ongoing development of the Wesley Trust, and approved the proposals to merge with the Acorn Trust to form a new organisation governed by Articles of Association aligned to Methodist ethos values and Governance Structure.

50/3. The Council delegated to the Methodist Schools Committee review of the proposed structure of the new organisation in order that this might be launched in time for the new academic year.

20.2.12 Oversight and trusteeship [MC/20/39]

The Council agreed to delegate to the Strategy and Resources Committee the preparation of a final draft of proposals for the Conference. Members of the Council were invited to submit comments so that the Strategy and Resources Committee could consider those in its discussions. In particular, the Council noted the need for the youth representatives to be consulted as a part of the ongoing work.

20.2.13 Matters arising [MC/20/55]

55/1. The Council received the report.

20.2.14 Decisions made [MC/20/56]

56/1. The Council received the report.

20.2.15 Ecumenical partnerships and sharing agreements [MC/20/57]

57/1. The Council adopted the report.

57/2. The Council adopted the report.

20.2.16 Singing the Faith+ Reference Group [MC/20/58]

58/1. The Council received the report.

58/2. The Council appointed the Singing the Faith Reference Group as set out in paragraph 4.1.

58/3. The Council adopted the revised terms of reference for the Singing the Faith Reference Group, as set out in paragraph 2.1.

20.2.17 Methodist Modern Art Collection Management Committee [MC/20/59]

59/1. The Council received the report.

59/2. The Council approved the proposed Terms of Reference for the Methodist Modern Art Collection Management Committee.

59/3. The Council approved the Aims of the Friends of the Methodist Modern Art Collection.

59/4. The Council appointed Corinne Miller and Katharine Farnham-Dear to the Methodist Modern Art Collection Management Committee for a term of up to six years.

20.2.18 Faith and Order Committee report [MC/20/60]

60/1. The Council received the report.

20.2.19 City Centre Churches and Projects [MC/20/61]

61/1. The Council received the report.

61/2. The Council added Whitechapel Mission to the city centre list under the terms of SO 440(1)(a).

20.2.20 Listed Buildings Advisory Committee report [MC/20/62]

62/1. The Council received the report.

20.2.21 President's Assistant [MC/20/63]

63/1. The Council agreed to the provision of a President's Assistant in the Driffeld-Hornsea Circuit for the connexional year 2020/2021.

20.2.22 The Revd Thomas Jackson endowment [MC/20/64]

64/1. The Council received the report.

64/2. The Council directed that capital held in Trust 4494 be released to the Whitechapel Methodist Mission in accordance with clause 3 of the Trust Deed dated 5 August 1927.

20.2.23 Methodist Schools appointments [MC/20/65]

65/1. The Council adopted the re-nomination by the Methodist Independent Schools Trustees of the Revd Stephen Burgess and Mrs Barbara Easton for a period of three years concluding 31 August 2023.

65/2. The Council adopted the nomination by the Methodist Independent Schools Trustees of Mr Stephen Holliday for a period of three years concluding 31 August 2023.

65/3. The Methodist Council adopted the re-nomination by Methodist Academies and Schools Trustees of the Revd Sally Ratcliffe, the Revd Paul Martin, Mrs Lesley Brookbanks, Mr David Kershaw, and Mr John Weaving for a period of three years concluding 31 August 2023.

65/4. The Methodist Council adopted the nomination by Methodist Academies and Schools Trustees of Mr Steven Colledge and Mrs Annette Foster for a period of three years concluding 31 August 2023.

65/5. The Methodist Council appoints Mr John Weaving as a Trustee of the Wesley Trust for a period of three years concluding 31 August 2023.

20.2.24 Guidelines on confidentiality in Part 11 proceedings [MC/20/66]

66/1. The Council received the report

66/2. The Council approved the guidelines on confidentiality for those involved in the Church's complaints and discipline proceedings as set out in the report.

The Secretary of the Conference presented the report of the small group of the Council which had considered MC/20/51, MC/20/52 and MC/20/53:

20.2.25 The Inclusive Methodist Church: The Report of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee [MC/20/52]

52/1. The Council received the report.

20.2.26 The Report of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Task Group [MC/20/51]

51/1. The Council received the report.

51/2. The Council affirmed the four elements of the statement, 'The Inclusive Methodist Church'.

51/3. The Council thanked the EDI Committee and the Task Group for their work.

51/4. The Council appointed the EDI Committee as presently constituted for a final year to August 2021.

51/5. The Council mandated the EDI Committee and EDI Task Group to work together on a final wording of the 'Inclusive Methodist Church' statement in consultation with the Faith and Order Committee and an implementation plan and to bring a final report to the Council in April 2021.

51/6. The Council agreed to ask the Conference to suspend SO 336 for the year 2020/2021.

20.2.27 Good Practice Guidelines for churches: Sexual Harassment [MC/20/53]

53/1. The Council endorsed the production of Good Practice Guidelines for Churches on Sexual Harassment for publication and launch at the Methodist Conference and directed Mrs Jill Baker to oversee the finalisation of the guidelines in conjunction with representatives

from Faith and Order, Equality Diversity and Inclusion, Safeguarding, Complaints and Discipline and the Learning Network.

53/2. *The Council expressed its thanks to Place for Hope for its work on this.*

The Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee presented the report of the small group of the Council which had considered MC/20/44, MC/20/32, MC/20/42 and MC/20/43:

20.2.28 Connexional Central Services Budget [MC/20/44]

44/1. *The Council approved the presentation of the budget by 'activity'.*

44/2. *The Council adopted the draft budget for 2020/21, noting that the current Covid 19 pandemic will necessitate a significant change in the figures as presented and directed that this work is taken forward by the Strategy and Resources Committee as soon as practicable.*

44/3. *The Council noted the impact of the 2020/21 budget on the subsequent two years. It recognised that presenting the budget by activity now gives greater insight into how the resources of the Connexional Team are deployed and resolved to review the allocations for 2021/22 and 2022/23 over the coming year.*

44/4. *The Council agreed to recommend to the Conference the district allocations of the assessment to the Methodist Church Fund set out in the paper, taking note of the current Covid 19 pandemic.*

44/5. *The Council directed the Strategy and Resources Committee and the Finance Sub-Committee to consider contingency plans for the finance of the Connexional Team and the wider Methodist Church as a matter of urgency.*

20.2.29 Strategy and Resources Committee [MC/20/32]

32/1. *The Council received the report.*

In considering resolution 32/1, the Council noted its concerns about the rising costs of the Oxford Place, Leeds property project (to which paragraph 6 of the report refers) and directed the Property Development Committee and the Strategy and Resources Committee to review this project and report back to the Council.

32/2. *The Council approved the process for the appointment of an Independent Trustee and Chair of the Pension and Assurance Scheme for Lay Employees of the Methodist Church from 1 September 2020, noting that there may now be delays in this timeline.*

32/3. *The Council approved the revised terms of reference for the Finance Sub-Committee as set out in the report.*

20.2.30 Methodist Church House [MC/20/42]

42/1. *The Council received the report.*

The Council declined resolution 42/2.

The Council agreed the following recommendations from the small group:

- i. The sub-committee is disbanded*
- ii. The Property Development Committee assumes control of the project*
- iii. The whole development is paused for the moment until the situation relating to the Covid 19 pandemic becomes clearer and therefore no contracts are signed during the pause*

- iv. ***The PDC must work with appropriate experts fully to analyse the scheme (ensuring it fulfils the decisions of the Council as reported to the 2018 Conference relating to this work), including the finance, in the months to come***
- v. ***Work needs to be taken forward at some stage to provide new facilities for the Connexion and the Connexional Team which enable flourishing and the Council directed the Property Development Committee to make the appropriate recommendations to the Council which fulfil this.***

20.2.31 Terms of reference for the review of the Self-Accounting Entities (SAEs) [MC/20/43]

The group reported the following points from its discussion:

- The importance of making appointments to the bodies which control the SAEs
- The need to balance control with empowerment
- Questions about how any of the SAEs are contributing to the mission of the Church
- The importance of the Council having assurance of good governance in these SAEs and having good processes to ensure that happens.
- Consideration of conflicts that may exist when we appoint individuals to trustee roles where they are serving in other appointments/employed within the Church (particularly members of the Connexional Team).

43/1. *The Council received the report.*

20.2.32 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

20.2.33 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

The Revd Gill Newton, chair of the Ministries Committee, presented the report of the small group of the Council which had considered MC/20/41 and MC/20/48.

20.2.34 Ministries Committee [MC/20/41]

The Council noted its thanks to the Ministries Team, particularly given the difficulties presented by the current situation in relation to major processes of the Church.

The Council noted the following points which the group had raised:

1. Several of the recommended changes to Standing Orders are quite pedantic and it was felt that the Council should ask the Law and Polity Committee to find ways in which the Secretary of the Conference might deal with minor changes in a more straightforward and effective way.
2. There is a number of occasions in the report when reference is made to consultation with the District Chairs. In practice, this has generally also meant consultation with the Warden of the Diaconal Order who is a member of the Chairs' Meeting. Therefore, the report should be amended to make explicit reference to consultation with the Warden where this has happened in reality.
3. The review requested in 41/6 should be undertaken with a report being brought to the Conference of 2021 and the review group should include a good balance of lay and ordained members.
4. The Queen's Foundation has experienced many staff changes in recent months (years) and the Council is encouraged to hold the institution and its staff and students in prayer.

41/1. *The Council received the report.*

41/2. *The Council agreed to recommend to the Conference the changes to Standing Order 745(4)(b) as laid out in the report.*

- 41/3. *The Council agreed to recommend to the Conference a revision of the phrase which appears at the end of obituaries "in the xxx year of their ministry" to read "in the xx year of their presbyteral or diaconal ministry."***
- 41/4. *The Council agreed to recommend to the Conference that Standing Order 153 be revised as laid out in the report.***
- 41/5. *The Council agreed to recommend to the Conference that Standing Order 732 be revised as laid out in the report.***
- 41/6. *The Council directed that a review group be set up to consider issues around Authorised to Serve status for transferring ministers and that a full review of Standing Order 732 becomes part of the remit of the group.***
- 41/7. *The Council directed that the Ministers of Other Conferences and Churches Oversight Committee be disbanded.***
- 41/8. *The Council commended the report and its recommendations to the Conference.***

20.2.35 Ministerial Covenant [MC/20/48]

The small group shared a number of points with the Council.

- 48/1. *The Council received the report.***
- 48/2. *The Council directed the working party to amend the report in relation to the detailed points raised and to ensure that it is consonant with the Theology and Ecclesiology of the Diaconate and the Methodist Diaconal Order report (2019) and Ministry in the Methodist Church report (2018) part B.***
- 48/3. *The Council directed that part 1 not be included in the final document.***
- 48/4. *The Council directed the amended report (Parts 2, 3 and 4 only) be submitted to the next Conference (as laid out in paragraphs 3 and 4 on page 131 of the Council papers).***

The Revd Leslie Newton presented the report of the small group of the Council which had considered MC/20/38.

20.2.36 Evangelism and Growth [MC/20/38]

- 38/1. *The Council received the report and commended it for presentation to the Conference.***

20.2.37 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

20.2.38 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

20.2.39 Additional meeting of the Council

The Council agreed that it would need to reconvene in the next few weeks (at a date to be determined), to consider matters related to the Conference and other urgent items.

The meeting closed in prayer.