

## Minutes of a meeting of the Methodist Council held on 26-27 January 2015 at High Leigh, Hoddesdon

**Present:** The President, the Vice-President and 48 voting members as follows:  
The Revd Caroline R Ainger, the Revd Dr Martyn D Atkins, Dr B Jill Barber, the Revd J A Jade Bath, Ms Rebecca Belshaw, Mrs Joy Blake, the Revd Christopher P Briggs, Deacon Andrew Carter, the Revd Olufemi R W Cole-Njie, the Revd Rachel D Deigh, Mr Jack Delbridge, the Revd Graham M Edwards, Dr Martyn Evans, Mr Andrew Fairlamb, the Revd Catherine Gale, the Revd David Gamble, the Revd Ruth M Gee, Mr Andrew Gibbs, the Revd David M Goodall, the Revd Graeme J Halls, Dr Nigel Hardwick, the Revd Paul Hill, the Revd Jacqueline A Horton, Professor Peter D Howdle, Mrs Jean Jackson, Mr Sandy Laurie, Mr Tim Layhe, Professor David R Matthews, the Revd Loraine N Mellor, Dr Daleep S Mukarji, the Revd Edwin T Myers, Mrs Anita Nicholson, the Revd Lionel E Osborn, Mrs Idy Osibudu, Mrs Heather Shipman, the Revd D Paul C Smith, Mr Christopher Stephens, the Revd Dr Joseph B Suray, Mr Doug Swanney, Mr Alan Sykes, the Revd Kerry W Tankard, Dr Val Turner, the Revd Dr Roger L Walton, Mr Eric Watchman, Mr Ian White, the Revd Steven J Wild, Mr Arfon Williams, the Revd Michaela A Youngson

**Apologies:** The Revd Rachel Borgars, the Revd Nigel Cowgill, the Revd Gareth J Powell, the Revd Dr Stephen Wigley, Mr Ted Awty

**Substitutes:** The Revd Paul H Davis, the Revd Jacqueline P Evans, the Revd Henry Lewis, the Revd Faith M Nyota

**Observers:** Mr Martin Ashford, Ms Jude Levermore, Mr Nick Moore (members of the senior leadership group of the Connexional Team), Mr John Chastney (Chair of the Audit Committee), the Revd David Grosch-Miller, the Revd Nicola V Price-Tebbutt (Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee), Ms Megan Thomas (Youth President), Mrs Louise C Wilkins (Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice)

**In attendance:** Jane Bates (Minutes), Louise Taylor

### 15.1.1 Letters

It was agreed that a letter of greeting should be sent to the Rt Revd Libby Lane, on her consecration as the Bishop of Stockport. The Chair and the Secretary sent a message to the Revd Dr Stephen D Wigley, as the funeral of his father was taking place as the Council met.

### 15.1.2 Minutes of the Methodist Council

The minutes of the Methodist Council held on 15-16 October 2014 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### 15.1.3 Decisions made since the last meeting of the Council [MC/15/1]

Martyn Atkins presented MC/15/1, a list of decisions made since the last meeting of the Council.

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

### 15.1.4 Report of the General Synod debate on the Anglican-Methodist Covenant

Peter Howdle updated the Council on the debate which had taken place at the Church of England General Synod. The Synod had endorsed the general wish that the two Churches should move forward with urgency, and agreed the proposals which the Conference had adopted. The Council noted the report.

### 15.1.5 Matters arising [MC/15/2]

Martyn Atkins presented MC/15/2.

**2/1. The Council noted the report.**

**15.1.6 Report of the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) held on 27 November 2014 [MC/15/3]**

Peter Howdle presented MC/15/3. In particular, the Council noted that the legal advice received regarding the *Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act* was that the Church does not need to register.

**3/1. The Council received the report.**

**15.1.7 Methodist Church House Redevelopment: Funding the Additional Work [MC/15/4]**

Peter Howdle presented MC/15/4, which set out the proposed improvements to Methodist Church House, and proposals for how they might be funded.

**4/1. The Council received the report.**

**4/2. The Council endorsed the recommendations of the Strategy and Resources Committee that the works as set out in paragraph 4 of the report be undertaken.**

**4/3. The Council agreed to provide up to £250k to the Centenary Hall Trustees for additional works at Methodist Church House and directed the Strategy and Resources Committee to determine the source of funding from the options set out in section 7 of the report.**

**4/4. The Council directed the Strategy and Resources Committee to make the budgetary provision as set out in paragraph 8.1 of the report.**

**15.1.8 Report from the Senior Leadership Group**

The senior leadership group reported the following matters to the Council:

- A staff satisfaction survey has been completed, some initial headlines were offered to the Council and a full report will be given to the Strategy and Resources Committee;
- A managers training day had been held, which had been a good opportunity to gather all those members of the Team who have line management responsibility;
- Development of the shared values is continuing through worship and through training opportunities;
- Explorations have been taking place regarding the Church of Scotland becoming a partner in the Joint Public Issues Team, and a pilot exercise is underway;
- Contact with staff at Churches Together in Britain and Ireland has been continuing in the area of issues relating to Israel-Palestine, and this is ongoing (as requested by the Council in previous discussions).

The Council noted the report.

**15.1.9 Report from January meeting of the Connexional Leaders Forum**

Doug Swanney reported from the January meeting of the Connexional Leaders' Forum, noting that most of the sessions had been led by a guest speaker, Bishop Robert Schnase. His input had enabled helpful conversations and strategic thinking to take place.

**15.1.10 Safeguarding Records: Joint Practice Guidance for the Church of England and the Methodist Church [MC/15/6]**

Hilary Walker was welcomed to the Council to present this and the next item. She presented MC/15/6, explaining that it had arisen from experiences in both the Churches, and that the intention is, in addition to the fuller guidance, to produce a quick reference sheet, and also to provide some training.

**6/1. The Council approved the recording guidance for use in safeguarding work in the Methodist Church.**

**15.1.11 Joint Safeguarding Arrangements with the Church of England [MC/15/7]**

Hilary Walker presented MC/15/7.

*7/1. The Council approved the creation of the new Joint Safeguarding Working Group and the terms of reference stated in the report.*

*7/2. The Council appointed the following Methodist members of the Joint Safeguarding Working Group as follows:*

*Mr Peter Ackerley (subject to the agreement of the chairs of the new group), Mr Tim Carter, the Revd Susan A McIvor, Mr Grahame Snelling, the Revd K Alison McDonald.*

The Council confirmed that the Methodist co-Chair of the group is the Revd Dr Elizabeth A Smith.

**15.1.12 Connexional Manse Trustees [MC/15/20]**

Nick Moore presented MC/15/20, the annual report of the Connexional Manse Trustees. It was agreed that summary financial information should be provided to the Council with future reports.

*20/1. The Council received the report.*

**15.1.13 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM**

**15.1.14 Update on valuation of pension funds**

Nick Moore updated the Council on the recent valuation of the two pension funds. The overall impact in relation to the Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme (MMPS) is that no change is needed. The overall impact in relation to the Pension and Assurance Scheme for Lay Employees of the Methodist Church is that a payment will be made from the Pension Reserve Fund and the normal pension date will be linked to the male state pension age (as with the MMPS); this will mean that the contributions will remain at the present level.

The Council noted the report.

**15.1.15 Consolidated Accounts for the year ended 31 August 2014 [MC/15/8]**

**Report of the Audit Committee [MC/15/9]**

Maureen Sebanakitta and Andrew Gibbs presented MC/15/8 and John Chastney presented MC/15/9.

The Council was informed, however, that since the papers were printed it had become clear that some changes are needed to the accounts before the Council can be asked to approve them. The Council therefore agreed to postpone the adoption of the accounts until the April meeting. The papers for the April meeting will highlight the changes and, having discussed the substantive points at this meeting, the discussion at that meeting will be confined to the changes which have been necessary. The resolutions attached to MC/15/8 and MC/15/9 were not taken.

The thanks of the Council were expressed to the Finance Office in the Connexional Team, and to the Audit Committee.

**15.1.16 Developing a Policy for the use of funds in the Connexional Priority Fund [MC/15/11]**

Peter Howdle presented MC/15/11, a discussion document from the Strategy and Resources Committee.

The Council discussed the paper in groups, and agreed the following summary of its responses to the three questions put to them at paragraph 12:

- (i) It is agreed that options a) and b) (ie local mission and ministry projects) should be a priority. The criteria for any grants should be clear and projects should be monitored. There was a general wish for decisions about funding to be made locally (ie via District Advance Funds (DAFs)) but an acknowledgement that allocation to DAFs will spread money thinly across the Connexion.
- (ii) There was strong support for c) (property advice) and d) (OPPs programme), moderate support for f) (green energy projects) and weak support for e) (discipleship resource).
- (iii) Some suggestions were made as to allocation:
  - 70% for a) and b), 30% for c) and d)
  - £1m over 5 years for c) and £0.5M over 5 years for d)
  - £3.5M for a) and b) and f)

These responses will be taken to the SRC, to form part of the budget discussions on this matter.

#### **15.1.17 Larger than Circuit [MC/15/12]**

Lorraine Mellor and Paul Wood presented MC/15/12 which represents an interim report of the working party.

The Council discussed the models of Larger than Circuit in groups.

**12/1. The Council received the report.**

#### **15.1.18 The Chair of the Council**

The Council elected the Revd Ruth M Gee for nomination to the Conference as Chair of the Council from 2015-2018.

#### **15.1.19 Matters to consider ahead of the 2015/16 budget round [MC/15/13]**

Nick Moore presented MC/15/13, which the Council discussed in groups.

The Council considered four alternative resolutions, and agreed the following:

**13/4. The Council recommended that the 2017/18 Methodist Church Fund assessment figure stated in the Connexional Central Services Budget should be 1% higher than the previous year.**

#### **15.1.20 Releasing Money for God's Mission [MC/15/14]**

Ian White presented MC/15/14.

**14/1. The Council received the report.**

**14/2. The Council made the following recommendations to the Conference:**

1. Circuit Treasurers should be required annually to compile a summary of all monies and investments held by each church in the Circuit and forward them to District Treasurers attached to the Standard Form of Accounts. This will ensure that decisions regarding the award of grants and allocation of resources are based on a complete picture of the financial situation of each individual church.
2. Standing Orders should be amended so that SO 955 (6)(a) is extended to include Model Trust money held by individual churches. The first sentence should be amended as follows [new wording in bold italic], with the remainder of SO 955 unchanged.
 

*Subject to the scrutiny of the Law and Polity Committee*

SO 955(6)(a) Subject to sub-clause (b) below a contribution shall be made annually to the relevant district Advance Fund from the model trust capital money held in each Circuit **and Local Church** at the end of the year as follows:

3. The Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) should be asked to work with churches to release funds/help churches to release endowment/bequests. Resources to assist this process will be included by the Council within the Connexional Central Services Budget as outlined.

**15.1.21 Accessibility to the Conference [MC/15/16]**

John Bell and Sam Taylor presented MC/15/16. The Council engaged in some discussion in small groups and in plenary session. The comments of the Council (both verbal and written) will inform the next stage of the working party's considerations.

**15.1.22 Connexional Allowances Committee [MC/15/17]**

John Bell presented MC/15/17, which set out the results of the survey conducted by the Connexional Allowances Committee on allowances above stipend and fees from occasional services and other activities.

*17/1. The Council received the report.*

*17/2. The Council directed the Connexional Allowances Committee to bring final proposals, based on the recommendations in this report and in the light of the discussion held at the Council, to the April 2015 meeting of the Council.*

**15.1.23 The future of the Countering Political Extremism Resource Group [MC/15/18]**

Rachel Lampard presented MC/15/18.

*18/1. The Council thanked past and present members of the Countering Political Extremism Resource Group for their work in support of the Methodist Church's belief that 'racism is a denial of the gospel'.*

*18/2. The Council agreed to establish an informal ecumenical group, as set out in option b of the report, to advise the Methodist Church, and other denominations if appropriate, on responding to the threat of political extremism when such advice is required.*

**15.1.24 Committee Appointments [MC/15/19]**

*19/1. The Council appointed Mr Clive Norris as a member of the Southlands Liaison Group.*

*19/2. The Council appointed the committee for the Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies, in fulfilment of Standing Order 335A.*

*19/3. The Council appointed the Revd Michael J Parrott to the Methodist Heritage Committee.*

**15.1.25 Joseph Rank Trust grants to the British Methodist Connexion [MC/15/21]**

*21/1. The Council received the report and noted with thanks the grants provided by the Joseph Rank Trust in 2014.*

**15.1.26 Equal Opportunities Monitoring [MC/15/22]**

*22/1. The Council received the report.*

**15.1.27 Overdraft facility [MC/15/23]**

*23/1. The Council delegated approval of the overdraft facility and authorisation of signatories to effect the renewal of the facility to the Strategy and Resources Committee, acting on the Council's behalf.*

**15.1.28 Authorisations and Delegations [MC/15/24]**

*24/1. The Council received the report.*

- 24/2. The Council appointed Louise C Wilkins under SO 331(1) to fulfil the duties assigned in the Model Trusts or in Standing Orders to the Property Secretary or to the General Secretary of the Property Division.**
- 24/3. The Council approved the revisions to the list of authorisations and delegations with immediate effect.**

**15.1.29 Network Relations with Regional Training Partnerships or Similar Ecumenical Groupings  
[MC/15/25]**

- 25/1. The Methodist Council appointed the Revd Dr Martin Ramsden to the Board of the Lindisfarne Training Partnership.**
- 25/2. The Methodist Council appointed the Revd John Fenn to the Council of the Eastern Region Ministry Course.**
- 25/3. The Council agreed to appoint a representative to the Board of Trustees of Luther King House Educational Trust, and noted that a name will be brought to a future meeting of the Council.**