

## Minutes of a meeting of the Methodist Council held on 16 May 2020 via video conferencing

- Present:** The President, the Vice-President and 48 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, Professor Ken Mortimer, Dr Daleep S Mukarji, the Revd Gillian M Newton, the Revd Leslie M Newton, Mrs Helen Norton, the Revd Richard Ormrod, the Revd Michael Parker, 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, the Revd Michaela A Youngson.
- Apologies:** The Revd Mark Dunn-Wilson, the Revd David W Hookins, the Revd Dr Jennifer A Hurd, the Revd Malcolm Peacock.
- 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), Mr Peter Pay (the United Reformed Church), 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 Director of the Ministries Team).
- In attendance:** Ms Jane Bates (Minutes), Ms Jillian Moody (Director of Communications), Ms Louise Taylor (Administration)
- Letters:** The Council sent letters of greeting and concern to:  
the Revd Mark Dunn-Wilson;  
Deacon Maureen Spinks and her daughter Deacon Rebekah-Joy Spinks.  
The Council sent a letter of greeting and thanks to Karin Farnworth, Events Coordinator in the Connexional Team.

### 20.3.1 Minutes of the Methodist Council held in March 2020

Bala Gnanapragasam sought clarification on minute 20.2.26 in respect of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion task group. It was confirmed that the Council had agreed to the implementation of the work towards the 'Inclusive Methodist Church', and that the task group had been given the mandate to progress that work.

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

### 20.3.2 Decisions made [MC/20/69]

**69/1. The Council received the report.**

### 20.3.3 Update from Connexional Secretary

The Connexional Secretary provided an update to the Council concerning the continuing work of the Connexional Team, particularly given the current closure of Methodist Church House. The Team had met online on 5 May, with 200 members of Council staff on the call. The Council heard about the support being offered to churches and communities where there is currently no income. It noted the Joint Public Issues Team's work to highlight the effects of the pandemic on those most in need.

The Council also noted that the World Methodist Council will now meet in 2022 rather than 2021, and that the European Methodist Council has cancelled its gathering scheduled for September 2020, and will meet online instead.

#### **20.3.4 Report from the Strategy and Resources Committee [MC/20/70]**

The chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee presented MC/20/70. It was noted that there will be a detailed report concerning Methodist Church House brought to the October meeting of the Council. The Council noted paragraph 6 of the report in relation to the need for the Council to borrow funds, on behalf of MIC, for the fittings for the Camden project.

The Council heard that there had been concerns raised about the feasibility and suitability of the project at Oxford Place, Leeds. Since the paper had been prepared, a letter had been received from the District Chair which would require further discussion and clarification, and, in the light of that, the Council agreed to the withdrawal of resolution 70/3.

**70/1. The Council received the report.**

**70/2. The Council directed that the Camden Methodist Church building project be funded from the larger internal fund balances of the Church, excluding the Methodist Church Fund itself, as described in the report.**

**Resolution 70/3 was withdrawn.**

**70/4. The Council re-appointed Capital Cranfield Trustees Limited (and their nominated appointee Ingrid Kirby) as the Independent Trustee of the Pension and Assurance Scheme for Lay Employees of the Methodist Church (PASLEMC) for one further year from 1 September 2020.**

**70/5. The Council appointed Mrs Helen Blair as a member of the Finance Sub-committee of the Strategy and Resources Committee under Standing Order 213(2B) from 1 September 2020.**

**70/6. The Council appointed Mr Ted Awty and Mrs Helen Woodall as representatives of the Strategy and Resources Committee on the Queen's Foundation Annual Review Committee, in accordance with the Queen's Foundation Partnership Agreement.**

#### **20.3.5 Financial Constraints [MC/20/72]**

The Connexional Secretary and the Director of Finance and Resources presented MC/20/72.

**72/1. The Council received the report.**

**72/2. The Council commended the planned review of the proposed budget for 2020/21 and subsequent years and requested that it include plans to ensure that**

- **income levels are updated for the current best estimates;**
- **fund balances remain above (or are restored to) reserve levels;**
- **expenditure plans are re-evaluated in the light of the reduced resources;**
- **the funding available for future years of "God For All" is clarified.**

**72/3. The Council directed that a level of financial planning is undertaken at the wider connexional level to support future financial resilience.**

**72/4. The Council directed its committees and subgroups and the Connexional Team to review all activities currently planned for 2020/2021 to ensure that only necessary work goes ahead and to reduce expenditure to a minimum where possible.**

#### **20.3.6 Refocusing God for All in the light of COVID-19 [MC/20/73]**

The Head of Mission presented MC/20/73.

**73/1. The Council received the report.**

**73/2. The Council agreed to recommend to the Conference that resolution 2 in the God for All report be not put and that the Conference adopt the revised budget for 2020/2021.**

**73/3. The Council directed the Strategy and Resources Committee to bring a new budget proposal for 2021/2022 and following to the January 2021 Council for recommendation to the 2021 Conference.**

#### **20.3.7 Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme**

The Director of Finance and Resources presented MC/20/82.

**82/1. The Council nominated Mr Ronald Calver, Mr Graham Danbury and Mr John Wyatt to the Conference for reappointment as Employer-Nominated Directors of the Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme from 1 September 2020.**

The chair of the Law and Polity Committee, Susan Howdle, and the Law and Polity Committee's representative to the Conference, Elizabeth Ovey, were welcomed to the meeting.

#### **20.3.8 Oversight and Trusteeship [MC/20/71]**

The Secretary of the Conference presented MC/20/71, which represented the further work which the Strategy and Resources Committee had undertaken on the Council's behalf.

The Council agreed revised resolutions to be put to the Conference as follows:

- 1. The Conference directs all Circuit Meetings to review the number of Church Councils in the Circuit and encourages Church Councils to work together to determine the best way of working to achieve the minimum number of trustee bodies necessary to fulfil its calling.**
- 2. The Conference refers to the Law and Polity Committee Section 4 of the report and directs the Committee to report to the 2021 Conference on the legal and constitutional issues that the proposal to create a smaller trustee body raises.**
- 3. The Conference directs the Secretary of the Conference to convene a review of the size of the Conference as required under SO 100(2) and to report with recommendations for any changes to the 2021 Conference.**
- 4. The Conference directs the Strategy and Resources Committee in consultation with the Faith and Order Committee to review the constitution, function and inter-relationship of all connexional committees, to bring interim proposals to the 2021 Conference, and to bring a full report with proposed changes to the Standing Orders to the 2022 Conference.**
- 5. The Conference directs the Ministries Committee to bring proposals for a discernment process for senior posts, to bring interim proposals to the 2021 Conference, and to bring a full report with proposed changes to the Standing Orders to the 2022 Conference.**
- 6. The Conference directs the Secretary of the Conference to ensure that each District reviews its mission plan, committee structure and ways of working and considers its findings alongside other Districts in a regional grouping.**
- 7. The Conference directs the Council to appoint a task group to receive reports from regional groups and to report to the 2021 Conference with proposals for change from 2022 onwards.**
- 8. The Conference directs the Faith and Order Committee to consider the report and to report to the 2021 Conference on the faith and order issues that the proposals raise.**
- 9. The Conference directs the Secretary of the Conference to convene a small group to have oversight of the work on structures of oversight and trusteeship to ensure that there is collaborative working, further consultation as necessary and that concerns already identified are addressed, and in order to ensure that the proposals brought to the 2021 Conference are cohesive and comprehensive.**

### **20.3.9 The Conference [MC/20/74, MC/20/75, MC/20/81]**

The Secretary of the Conference updated the Council in respect of plans for the Conference, and the essential business which is to be dealt with at this Conference. It is hoped that there will be opportunities for celebration in the new connexional year, including the ordination services.

The Council received the report from the Conference Business Committee (MC/20/74), the Law and Polity advice regarding the proposals of the Business Committee (MC/20/75) and a report from the Law and Polity Committee concerning the suspension of SOs 728 and 728A.

**74/1. *The Council received the report.***

**81/1. *The Methodist Council, in exercise of its powers under Standing Order 211(1)(b), hereby suspended Standing Orders 728, clauses (3) and (4), and 728A, clauses (2) and (3), until the close of the Conference of 2020 and directed that procedures for the achievement, so far as may in the circumstances be practicable, of their intended purpose shall be such as shall be determined by the Conference.***

Susan Howdle and Elizabeth Ovey were thanked for the enormous amount of work that had been necessary to ensure that the Conference could meet in this form.

Thanks were also expressed to the Conference Arrangements Team, in these very unusual circumstances, and in particular to Karin Farnworth, Events Coordinator, who retires from the Connexional Team this summer.

### **20.3.10 3Generate 2020 [MC/20/80]**

The Head of Mission presented MC/20/80.

**80/1. *The Council received the report.***

**80/2. *The Council commended the planning for 3Generate 365 in this time when physical gatherings are not possible, and recommends that each District Chair nominate a 3Generate Ambassador.***

**80/3. *The Council agreed to recommend to the Conference that, with the advice of the Law and Polity Committee, it adopt such measures for the suspension or amendment of the provisions of SO 250 as are necessary to enable the purposes of the Children and Youth Assembly to be achieved through 3Generate 365, as outlined in the report.***

### **20.3.11 Sale of land at Cliff College [MC/20/76]**

**76/1. *The Council approved the sale of land identified in Project 44387.***

**76/2. *The Council granted the Cliff College Committee permission to retain the proceeds of sale and to apply them for general purposes.***

### **20.3.12 Membership of Southlands Liaison Group and Southlands Methodist Trust [MC/20/77]**

**77/1. *The Council appointed the Southlands Liaison Group and the Southlands Methodist Trust as set out in the report.***

### **20.3.13 Methodist Way of Life [MC/20/78]**

**78/1. *The Council received the report.***

**78/2. *The Council commended the A Methodist Way of Life material for use across the Connexion.***

**78/3. *The Council approved the timeline offered in appendix 2.***

**20.3.14 Epworth Old Rectory constitution [MC/20/79]**

***79/1. The Council noted the changes to the constitution of the Epworth Old Rectory (Trust).***

The Council wished to record its thanks to members of the Connexional Team and those across the Connexion for their response to the present COVID-19 crisis.

Thanks were expressed to those who were completing their term of service on the Council.