

22. Methodist Council, part 2

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SECTION E

GENERAL REPORT (2)

This report contains those items considered by the Council and not reported elsewhere in the Agenda.

1.1 Governance responsibilities

In accordance with its governance responsibilities, the Council:

- received the report on ecumenical partnerships and sharing agreements;
- received an update report from the Singing the Faith Reference Group and adopted its revised terms of reference;
- approved the terms of reference for the Methodist Modern Art Collection Management Committee;
- approved the aims of the Friends of the Methodist Modern Art Collection;
- made appointments and nominations to various bodies and committees;
- received a report from the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee;
- agreed to the provision of a President's Assistant under the terms of SO 113(2)(a) for the connexional year 2020/2021;
- on behalf of the Conference, agreed to a change in the terms of an endowment;
- approved the guidelines on confidentiality for those involved in complaints and discipline proceedings;
- endorsed the production of Good Practice Guidelines for churches in the area of sexual harassment, for publication and launch at the Conference;
- received a report from the Strategy and Resources Committee which set out the details of the connexional property projects and noted its concerns about the rising costs of the project at Oxford Place, Leeds;
- 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;
- approved the revised terms of reference for the Finance Sub-Committee;
- considered terms of reference for a review of the Self-Accounting Entities;
- agreed to an addition to the City Centre List.

1.2 Other business

The Council also heard reflections from the President and Vice-President on their year of office.

Should members of the Conference wish to view them, Council papers and minutes are available on the website at www.methodist.org.uk/council

***RESOLUTION

22/1. The Conference received the General Report of the Council.

SECTION F

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WITH TRUSTEES FOR METHODIST CHURCH PURPOSES

1. Further to the work of the Legal and Property Support for Managing Trustees working party (reported to the 2018 Conference) in response to Memorials M26-29 to the 2016 Conference, and the subsequent work of an Implementation Group (reported to the 2019 Conference), the Council received a proposed Service Level Partnership Agreement.

2. The Council adopted this Agreement, noting that this was a shorter document from that originally envisaged, which sets out the partnership in broad outline. The Council agreed that there would be detailed annexes which would include the requirements for key performance indicators, and delegated this work to members of the Strategy and Resources Committee in consultation with the Interim General Counsel/Company Secretary.

***RESOLUTION

22/2. The Conference received the Report.

SECTION G

LOSS OF EARNINGS AT THE CONFERENCE

It was brought to the attention of the Council that Standing Order 202, which concerns the provision of compensation for loss of earnings for those attending connexional committee meetings, does not refer to attendance at the Conference. In the light of the Conference's recent considerations of matters of accessibility and in the interests of ensuring that as many people as possible are enabled to participate, the Council proposes that the provision be extended to the Conference itself.

***RESOLUTIONS

22/3. The Conference received the Report.

22/4. The Conference amended SO 202 as follows:

202 Expenses and Loss of Earnings. (1) This Standing Order applies to **the Conference, the Methodist Council, and** all boards and committees appointed by the Conference (in this Standing Order called 'parent bodies') and to all subordinate committees, sub-committees and working parties appointed by or on the authority of a parent body.

.....

(4) A loss of earnings allowance shall be paid, if desired, in accordance with clauses (5) and (6) below, to all members of the **Conference, the Methodist Council** and of any other bodies to which this Standing Order applies and which are specified for this purpose under clause (7) below.

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SECTION H

MEMORIAL M5 (2019)

1. The 2019 Conference received memorial M5 in relation to amendment of Standing Order 931(5)(i) to exclude specifically enforcement of Parking Charge Notices.

2. The Memorial read:

The Exeter Coast and Country (24/3) Circuit Meeting (Present: 67; Voting: 55 for, 3 against) requests that Standing Order 931(5)(i) should be amended to specifically exclude enforcement of Parking Charge Notices.

A number of local trustees with responsibility for church car parks are facing increasing problems relating to car park management including long-term, unauthorised parking, abuse and threats. The Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) interprets this Standing Order as requiring local trustees to seek the permission of the Methodist Council for each enforcement of a disputed Parking Charge Notice; thereby, in practice, making local agreement with registered parking enforcement companies impossible. Following clamping scandals, parking enforcement on private land has become highly regulated and without its earlier stigma. A number of companies will offer contracts where only vehicles reported to them by local trustees, and supported by photographic evidence, will incur penalty charges and will manage enforcement on behalf of the trustees.

Amendment of Standing Order 931(5)(i) as proposed will allow local trustees to make suitable arrangements with appropriate companies in order to preserve limited car parking availability for intended purposes.

Reply

The Conference thanks the Exeter Coast and Country Circuit for its memorial and for the consideration they have placed on the best use of Methodist property, both physical and monetary.

Given the current uncertainty as to aspects of the legal position, it would be premature to formulate the guidance which has been requested, but the Conference notes the significant practical difficulties facing churches in such circumstances and refers the memorial to the Methodist Council for further consideration of the issues raised.

3. The Council considered the following aspects of this in detail:
 - a. SO 931(5)
 - b. Protection afforded to Managing Trustees generally by requiring them to obtain approval under 931(5) before issuing proceedings or having proceedings issued by a third party in the name of the Managing Trustees.
 - c. What Managing Trustees are able to do without the need for consent under SO 931(5).
 - d. Whether SO 931(5) requires amendment to remove the need for Connexional Team consent before proceedings are issued by third party parking enforcement companies (PECs) to recover unpaid parking charge notices (PCNs)
 - e. Whether the requirement for consent automatically excludes use of PECs.
 - f. Implications of enabling PECs to issue proceedings in the name of Managing Trustees and TMCP as owner of the car park without any checks.
 - g. Practical consequences of Managing Trustees entering into agreements with PECs and areas on which MTs would require guidance.
 - h. Implications of association with unpopular third party car parking enforcement companies.
4. In the light of its consideration of the issues raised, the Council reports to the Conference that, given that the current position provides for issuing notices but for obtaining Connexional Team consent for litigation, recommends that there be no change.

*****RESOLUTION**

22/5. The Conference adopted the Report as its further reply to M5 (2019).

SECTION I

MEMORIAL M12 (2019)

1. The 2019 Conference received the memorial and adopted as its reply the text shown in italics below.

M12 Substitute District Chair

The Birmingham District Synod, Representative Session (Present: 118; Voting 117 for, 0 against) asks the Conference to make necessary changes in Standing Orders (principally SO 426) for there to be a substitute for the Chair of District recommended by the District and approved by the Methodist Council who can act for and behalf of a District Chair if she or he is unable by reason of health or some other reason to fulfil her or his responsibilities in the District and the Connexion. The named person should be approved by the Methodist Council so as to be able to attend the Conference, the Connexional Leaders' Forum, District Chairs' Meetings including extraordinary meetings and to receive minutes of all such meetings and communications relating to District Chairs. Where appropriate copies of such communication could also be sent to the substantive Chair if she or he

chooses.

Reply

The Conference thanks the Birmingham District for its memorial.

Standing Order 426(4) makes provision for the appointment of a temporary deputy Chair in the event of the Chair being unable to exercise her or his responsibilities on account of ill-health or other cause. The responsibility for making such an appointment lies with the Synod or the District Policy Committee (or the President should it be in an emergency). Unlike the provision (SO 426(2)) for the appointment of a permanent deputy or deputies, there is no exclusion of particular functions detailed in the Standing Order. It therefore appears to the Conference that in general the request that the District makes can already be met.

There are, however, some specific restrictions which can impinge on these arrangements. The membership of the Conference is determined under clause 14 of the Deed of Union and includes (v) the Chair or Chairs of each home district. Therefore, when the Conference designates a presbyter to be a Chair of District it effectively elects that person to be a member of the Conference and the understanding of the Conference has been that that membership is not transferable.

The purpose of the Connexional Leaders' Forum (CLF) is described in SO 230 as being 'to watch over one another in love in order to support each person in the exercise of her or his particular responsibilities.' Whilst it might be helpful to a deputy Chair to attend the Forum to receive such support, the CLF is not constituted as a body in which the views of a District are represented but rather as a collegial gathering the nature of which is enhanced by consistency of membership throughout the year.

SO 230A makes provision for the Chairs' Meeting. The Chairs meet by custom with the Secretary of the Conference and the Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order. The Meeting is for 'the discussion of stationing and other matters of mutual concern and for reflection on the work of God in the Districts and Connexion.' It might be that the Chairs agree that it is useful for a deputy to join them if one of their number is unavailable and that the minutes of their meeting might be shared with a deputy; such an agreement might be influenced by (if it can be forecast) the length of time that the deputy is expected to exercise the responsibilities of the Chair. The Conference therefore urges the Chairs' Meeting and the Secretary of the Conference in respect of the membership of the CLF to consider this memorial and to determine relevant processes with regard to temporary deputy Chairs.

The Conference referred the Memorial and its draft reply to the Methodist Council to consider, in consultation with the Law and Polity Committee, the policy issues raised and to report the Conference in 2020.

2. The Council, having consulted with the Law and Polity Committee, considered the policy issues raised and proposes the following:
 - (1) the Chairs delegate to the Secretary of the Conference and an appropriate representative or representatives of the Chairs' Meeting power to decide when and if a deputy be invited to the Chairs/Warden meeting;
 - (2) a deputy only be invited to the Connexional Leaders' Forum if it seems to the Secretary of the Conference and the President and Vice-President that it is important for a particular reason.

*****RESOLUTION**

22/6. The Conference adopted the Report as its further reply to M12 (2019).

SECTION J METHODIST SCHOOLS COMMITTEE AND THE WESLEY TRUST

Introduction

1. The primary purposes of the Methodist Schools Committee are to ensure positive and constructive collaboration between the Methodist Academies and Schools Trust (MAST), the Methodist Independent Schools Trust (MIST), the Wesley Trust and their schools, to share resources, to encourage the development of the Methodist ethos in all our schools and to provide annually a co-ordinated report to the Conference through the Methodist Council on behalf of all Methodist Schools.

Joint Working and Initiatives

2. The Trusts have worked together in the following ways:
 - a. Actively engaging with the Methodist Schools Committee (MSC);
 - b. Continuing through the MSC the necessary processes of discussion and identification of key areas of work required to enable the MSC, in due course, to submit to the Conference, in 2021, a schools' educational strategy for the Church; the purpose of the strategy is to help guide future planning and interaction between the Church and the schools;
 - c. Through the Ethos Development Group, sharing experience and needs across the Trusts including, for example, how best to use resources such as *Understanding Christianity* and other RE teaching resources, including making access via the website to the Methodist story. A film resource is also being developed;
 - d. The website, www.methodistschools.org.uk launched in September 2017 has been added to with new resources for school worship, assemblies, governance and leadership;
 - e. MAST and MIST have held conferences inviting Heads and/or Trustees from each Trust to attend;
 - f. Implementing a Service Agreement for the Methodist Schools Office to meet developing needs of MAST, alongside continued servicing and administration requirements of the Office from MIST;
 - g. Discussing with Southlands College and Wesley House, Cambridge the development of leadership and governor training materials.

MAST

3. Facts and Figures:
 - There are currently 66 Methodist maintained schools under the oversight of the Methodist Council, educating approximately 15,000 children.
 - 26 of our schools are solely Methodist and the rest held in partnership, most commonly with the Church of England. All are in the Primary phase.
 - About a half of our schools are in the North West of England (predominantly in the Districts of Lancashire and Bolton and Rochdale), with the rest scattered across England covering, in all, 40 different Local Authorities and 18 Dioceses.
 - Around 10% of our schools have become academies in non-Methodist groups; this requires a particular kind of MAST oversight to ensure that the academy chains are honouring the schools' Methodist Trust.
 - In a development since last year, just under 10% of our schools are now in Methodist-based academy trusts.
 - In OFSTED terms, just over 90% of Methodist schools are currently judged good or outstanding.
 - In the Statutory Inspections of Anglican and Methodist Schools (known as SIAMS), all our schools are good or better. Amongst church schools across the country, this is a particularly good marker.

4. We continue to operate in challenging times for schools. In September, OFSTED introduced a new framework which shifted the balance of school inspections to take greater account of the breadth of provision alongside the consistent emphasis on results. At the same time, the schedule for church school inspections entered only its second year while the new legal expectations around provision of Relationships and Sex Education gave rise to disturbances in some schools and anxieties in others. The decline in the capacity of Local Education Authorities became even more apparent, even in areas where they have so far maintained a good service. Many schools are experiencing extreme pressures on their budgets. Specialist provision for Special Educational Needs is very limited while the need continues to increase, especially around issues of mental health. In many areas, schools are compensating for the loss of other support for families – sourcing clothes and food for children has now become routine where it was before, perhaps, exceptional.
5. This year has seen the appointment of the first full-time Head of Service for MAST which has transformed MAST's capacity to support Methodist schools in the state sector. In addition, a number of serving headteachers have been invited to act as Regional Leaders for Education (RLEs) to increase MAST's presence across the country. This will ensure that MAST has an individual supportive relationship with each one of its schools, wherever they are in the country. These developments have been made possible due to the generous support of the Southlands Methodist Trust and of Westminster College Oxford Trust. The popularity of our summer school leaders' conferences continues to grow. To these we have added a programme of regional roadshows to increase access and engagement, an enlarged support programme for new headteachers and a themed training event in the autumn. We continue to offer at least one annual event for chaplains as well as developing opportunities to support chaplains regionally. The new organisation, the Centre for Chaplaincy in Education, is a valuable partner in this work.
6. The introduction of a new SIAMS inspection schedule, by which the Council's legal responsibilities for the Christian character of Methodist schools is secured, has largely gone very well. In its second year it is being refined but not substantially changed. For example, in line with concerns about workload for school leaders, schools will no longer have to submit many pages of self-evaluation. SIAMS remains a significant piece of joint working with our colleagues in Church of England education. The reports of school inspections, which are all available online, highlight the many strengths of our Methodist schools. They also highlight the areas in which we need to develop future work such as consolidating the strength of religious education. One of our most popular training sessions looks at what it means to be 'Methodist' in a school context. To supplement this Methodist understanding, the Methodist RE Resource has now been made available online and a Methodist story video is in production.
7. We are very sorry that Alan Davies will be leaving us at the end of his term of office in August 2020. Alan has overseen a sea-change in MAST's capacity to do well by its schools. The group is profoundly indebted to him and wish him the very best for the future. We are pleased to confirm the nomination of Steven Colledge as the new Chair of MAST to succeed Alan Davies. Steven is a recently retired Headteacher and educational leader currently based in Cirencester.

MIST

8. Facts and Figures:
 - There are currently 19 independent schools linked in some way to MIST: Trust Schools (8), Acquired Schools (4), Associated Schools (3), Affiliated Schools (4) – a full list and details can be found on the website: www.methodistschools.org.uk.
 - MIST is directly responsible as Trustees for the 8 Trust Schools and as Sole Member of the Trusts of the 4 acquired schools; the General Secretary of MIST is a Governor at the Associated Schools and one of the Affiliated Schools.
 - There are over 10,000 pupils on roll in Methodist Independent Schools.
 - Fourteen of the schools have boarders as well as day pupils.

- Three of the schools are for children of nursery and primary age only, two have pupils from 11-18 only and the rest offer continuity of education from 3 to 18.
 - All of the schools are inspected by the Independent Schools Inspection Service (ISI) which reports to OFSTED; all such inspections in the past academic year have confirmed high standards in all the schools. Copies of independent school inspection reports are published on each school's website and at www.isi.net.
 - Chairs of District are ex-officio Governors of any Methodist Independent Schools in their District
 - All schools have Chaplains, most of whom are Methodist presbyters (with two lay Chaplains).
9. After many years of support and in face of continuing deficits, MIST decided that Kingsley School in Bideford (formerly Edgehill College) needed to be sold, or, if a suitable buyer could not be found, closed, though MIST was anxious to ensure, if it could, the jobs of staff and continuity of education for the pupils. MIST had provided very substantial financial support to the school over many years but, especially in recent years, deficits mounted and actions to stem the deficits proved unsuccessful so the overall debt accrued by the school had become too large to justify or sustain. Fortunately, a buyer was found who was prepared to take the school over and considered that it had the resources needed to invest in the school's future as well as protecting its cashflow in the short term. This buyer was also supportive of the school's established ethos and so all-round continuity of provision was secured. This single decision has strengthened the Trust's cashflow and thus protected the interests of the whole group.
10. Methodist independent schools are determined to continue to provide an all-round education infused with a strong Christian ethos informed by their Methodist foundation in an era of political, economic and social scepticism, uncertainty and change. They are committed to doing everything within their power to increase the number of bursaries available to enable the offer of places to as wide a cross section of the community as possible, though several schools are currently working within the constraints of deficit budgets. The 43% increase in the employer's contribution to teachers' pension scheme and the likelihood of business rates relief being withdrawn threaten to make them less, rather than more, affordable. In the academic year 2018/19 MIST schools provided over £5,000,000 in means-tested bursaries to help hundreds of children whose family circumstances would otherwise restrict access to attend the schools; these bursaries are funded by a mixture of funds raised from using school facilities out of term or school time and from diverting a proportion of the fees paid by all to support the costs of others. In addition, the Methodist Bursary Fund made awards for Methodist families attending Methodist independent schools totalling just over £130,000. At Queens College (Taunton) and Shebbear College (Devon), Syrian refugee children continue to benefit from a fresh start at school in the UK thanks to partnerships with local charities. In other schools, either through local partnerships or arrangements with national organisations, such as Springboard, our schools are able to make it possible for many children affected by a wide range of personal difficulties to become pupils at our schools. In this way the schools seek to be as inclusive as possible and they are determined to raise more funds to extend these opportunities in the future.
11. Methodist schools have a strong reputation for working with young people in need. For example, Methodist schools are actively engaged in local community partnerships with a wide range of social groups, sports clubs and schools; putting their facilities to good use for wide benefit. Some such activities are informal, others subject to more formal agreements. In the most recent annual reports to Trustees, for example, it is estimated that MIST schools are used by several hundred outside groups, with tens of thousands of people (children and adults) making use of the schools' facilities. Queens College in Taunton, for example, runs an extensive range of Saturday classes for local schoolchildren, Woodhouse Grove hosts the Bradford City academy programme, Truro School hosts the Cornwall Music Service, Kent College Canterbury hosts a Porchlight annual dinner, and there are many more examples reaching people of many different ages, backgrounds and interests.
12. Methodist schools are also actively engaged in international outreach and partnerships. Ashville College in Harrogate, Kingswood School in Bath and Culford School in Suffolk, for example, have long established links with sustainable projects in Malawi. In the summer of 2019, students and staff from Woodhouse Grove visited their school and community partner schemes in Uganda and Truro High

School undertook a development project trip to Cambodia. Two former students from Kent College, Canterbury arranged a student conference in Oxford in September; this enabled students to develop resources for assemblies back in their host schools drawing on a range of presentations including Christian Aid, Edukid and All We Can.

13. These international partnerships are making a lasting impact in the communities and change attitudes in our students and thus in our schools. Culford's Malawi commitment, for example, over the past decade has enabled a new school to be built from scratch and that now provides a life changing education for 160 children each year. Kent College, Canterbury has been involved with Klerruu School and Saba Saba School in Iringa, Tanzania for the past 10 years and Kent College, Pembury has had a similar partnership with a Shree Deurali primary school in Nepal.
14. During the year MIST discussed and consulted on its new Group Plan, for 2020-25. This has four key objectives: *Christian in Character; Connected; Collaborative and Effective; Commercially Strong and Affordable*. At the core of the plan is the commitment of MIST to developing a culture that encourages and enables collaboration, communication and co-operation between the schools and MIST and between MIST, MAST and the Wesley Trust. Such commitment to co-operation goes beyond Methodist boundaries too. We are committed to a collective aim to deliver a financially sustainable, inclusive education that is focused strongly on both the individual and the community experience, shaped by Christian values.

The Wesley Trust

15. Facts and Figures:

- There are currently 3 Methodist schools within the Wesley Trust educating approximately 1000 children aged 3-11
 - All 3 schools joined the Trust in the 2018/19 academic year
 - The schools are all based in the North West of England
 - In OFSTED terms, all the schools are currently judged good or outstanding
 - In the Statutory Inspections of Anglican and Methodist Schools (known as SIAMS), all our schools are good or better.
 - There are approximately 110 staff employed across the schools.
 - There have been significant changes to key personnel within the Trust.
16. 2019 was a busy year for the Wesley Trust. It started the year with one academy: Nutgrove in St Helens; Rosehill, Tameside joined in January 2019 and Wesley School, Bury joined in July 2019. We are now in the early stages of starting to work collaboratively, establishing cohesive systems across the schools. This harmonisation of approach better facilitates providing economies of scale and enabling school to school support. As we develop this further it will strengthen our offer to our schools and their pupils and staff.
 17. Anyone visiting the schools quickly recognises the Christian ethos within each school which is demonstrated through strong relationships and pastoral care. It is clear the schools go out of their way to support both pupils and staff, often going the extra mile for the most vulnerable pupils.
 18. The Wesley Trust worked with the collective Trade Unions to establish a Recognition Agreement for all Wesley Trust Schools nationally moving forward.
 19. During Autumn 2019 there were significant changes to the personnel within the Trust. David Lamper stepped down as founding CEO to enable Julie-Ann Hewitt (CEO of Acorn Trust) to take up the role. This change was recognition within the Trust that the CEO needed to be based closer to the schools in the Trust to facilitate collaborative working and provide hands on support to the schools. David Lamper led the Trust well during his tenure and established the strong foundations upon which we will continue to grow and develop. Julie-Ann has extensive experience of leading an academy trust and will utilise this knowledge in developing the Wesley Trust. At the same time Alan Davies retired

as Chair of the Trust. David Kershaw, the Vice-Chair has now been appointed as Chair. Alan played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Trust and its early development, building up a good reputation for the Trust and developing its profile; David Kershaw has committed to continuing to build upon this.

20. Growth is a priority of the Trust and considerable work has taken place to facilitate this.
- The CEO and Chair have been proactive in visiting Methodist Schools to promote the Wesley Trust and the benefits for schools in joining the Trust. They also continue working at raising the profile of the Trust.
 - Good progress was made with the Manchester Diocese of the Church of England - this was an area where there had been barriers to the academisation of Methodist Schools: the protocol for jointly founded Methodist/Anglican schools to academise was approved by the Wesley Trust and by the Diocese.
 - One of the ambitions for the Wesley Trust is to open a new Methodist School - this needs to be done through the Free Schools programme. The Wesley Trust has responded to the requests of Methodist Districts and Circuits to explore the possibility of establishing a new school.
 - Considerable work has been undertaken to work towards a merger between Wesley Trust and the Acorn Trust. The Acorn Trust currently has two Methodist primary schools within Wigan. The Council noted the strong alignment between the vision and values of both Trusts 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. 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. The merged Trust will have a new name indicating its close affiliation to the Methodist Church but also welcome community schools with no current Methodist affiliation.

Our Calling is lived out and reflected in the life and work of the Trusts and the Schools:

21. Each of the schools' groups gives serious thought to its Christian character and the living out of what it means to be a Methodist school operating in each particular context. The joint Ethos Group oversees this, giving an opportunity for each sector to grow together: reflecting on practice, sharing, challenging and being challenged.
22. Our schools offer frequent, moving and creative opportunities which invite children to worship in formal and informal settings. Children experience a breadth of styles of worship, from the grandeur of the cathedral to reflective prayer spaces in their own classroom. Many schools have an outdoor prayer walk or incorporate worship in their Forest School. Around the schools' group, the quality and creativity of what is offered in worship is often very high. This is supported by our training for chaplains and the high quality resources for worship available on the Methodist Schools website. Schools are encouraged to maintain an attitude of awe and wonder outside defined worship times, so that marvelling and reflecting on life and the world are woven into the fabric of school life. The SIAMS framework reinforces this, looking for worship as the 'beating heart' of the life of our schools.
23. The fellowship of community, and the possibility of being a Christian community, is an important hallmark. This provides the context for our learning and caring. All our schools offer a liberal broad and balanced curriculum themselves on the extent to which they emphasise opportunities for rounded human development by expanding children's horizons through co-curricular experiences. In contrast to the struggling state of religious education nationally, the schools' group aims for Methodist schools to be beacons of good practice. The Methodist Schools website hosts the digitised and updated version of the Methodist RE Resource with material on distinctive features such as the covenant, the Methodist Art Collection, JPIT, All We Can, and learning about John Wesley. This is available not just to Methodist schools but has been promoted across the RE teaching community and the wider Church. A video is in production, telling the background 'Methodist Story' to support staff in developing the ethos of our schools. The website also hosts teaching materials on aspects of the legacy of the Reformation, such as a popular lesson on the first woman to be ordained in Britain,

and valuable material on world citizenship. It is a feature of our school communities that we 'watch over one another in love'. Across the group the high standards of pastoral care in our schools are much valued. But also valuable is our support for staff and the support afforded by belonging to a group. This is particularly true for our head teachers, for whom the role can often be a lonely vocation. Our close relationships, caring oversight and the fellowship of our head teacher communities allows for a fellowship for head teachers, which is otherwise often lacking.

24. Service is a strength of all our schools and one which is widely valued, regardless of individual faith conviction. Our schools have strong relationships with local charities as well as creating a global perspective through links with *All We Can*, *Edukid*, *JPIT* and *Christian Aid* particularly. Within MIST, G2L AIMS ('Global to Local' Action in Methodist Schools) continues the work of World AIMS and gives schools opportunity to maximise local contacts and staff special interests as a recognised part of their service and outreach. The new SIAMS inspection schedule requires that schools do not just collect money for charity but that they also challenge children to 'courageous advocacy' through opposing injustice. We continue to link up with the work of *Action for Children* and two of our MIST schools have given places to refugee children from Syria, in both cases through links with the activities of local Methodist churches and/or charities.
25. Although our schools are not the setting for Evangelism in its narrow sense, they are informed by the Christian narrative which is supported by the increasing emphasis on ethos in both MAST and MIST. The schools create almost 90 Methodist communities through which Christian human values and an awareness of the gospel perspective infuse the lives of children and adults and reaches out, through them, into local communities. Our schools are denominational but not confessional. This means that they do not proselytise or limit pupils' own faith choices. Nevertheless, they are chosen by families often because of their Christian foundation and their deliberate focus on values and rounded human development. With around 25,000 children and 5,000 staff and through them, a relationship with families and the wider school community, it is reasonable to assume a reach of our schools of about 100,000 people, week in, week out. Some people say, 'For us, this is our church'; through international boarding, the influence of this 'church' spreads more widely than might be imagined.

*****RESOLUTION**

22/7. The Conference received the report.

SECTION K EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)

At its meeting in April 2019, the Council passed resolution 44A/4:

In order to assist the EDI Committee in its work of shaping the Methodist Church to be the inclusive Church we have long committed ourselves to be; the Council agreed to establish a task group to:

- (i) define the Council's EDI strategy giving careful attention to all areas of inclusion.*
- (ii) work closely with the connexional EDI adviser*
- (iii) review the composition of the EDI Committee.*
- (iv) bring an initial report to the next meeting of the Council, and a final report to the Council no later than March 2020.*

Over the last year, the task group met with the Chair of the EDI Committee and the EDI Adviser and has developed the vision of 'The Inclusive Church' which is reflected in both the report that it brought to the Council and the report of the Committee. The main themes of 'The Inclusive Church' were outlined to the Council at its meeting in October and considered by the EDI Committee at its residential meeting in February 2020.

The Council meeting in March affirmed the four elements of the statement 'The Inclusive Methodist Church'. That Church is defined as one which

1. Welcomes in safety all who wish to be part of the life of the Church whether through worship, learning and caring, service or evangelism.
2. Upholds the discipline of the Methodist Church in the face of discrimination. Rejecting and resisting all behaviours which are discriminatory or belittling.
3. Celebrates diversity in the variety of God's creation.
4. Represents the diversity of the Methodist Church throughout its life and structures and affirms that there is no place for discrimination in our processes of selection, discernment and appointment.

The Council affirmed the intention of the Task Group and Committee to work towards this vision. It thanked the EDI Committee and the Task Group for their work and 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.

In order to enable this, the Council appointed the EDI Committee as presently constituted for a final year to August 2021 and therefore agreed to ask the Conference to suspend SO 336 for the year 2020/2021.

The Conference adopted Notices of Motion 103/2020, 104/2020, 105/2020 and 106/2020 [Daily Record 4/17].

*****RESOLUTIONS**

22/8. The Conference received the Report.

22/8a. The Conference:

- (i) welcomed the development of the Inclusive Methodist Church strategy and paid tribute to the efforts of those who are working to promote equality, diversity and inclusion within our connexion and to root out all discrimination. This requires the necessity of an explicit anti-racist policy in order to ensure not only diversity but an active stance against all forms of discrimination. The Conference recognises that this work requires joint effort and financial resources, in order that it may succeed and commits itself to ensure that those resources are found and provided;**
- (ii) requested the Methodist Council to seek to build strategic anti-racist actions that call for the raising up of individuals (especially those hurting from this issue), partner with other churches (across denominations) and professional bodies and move forward to a just world;**
- (iii) requested the Council to ensure that those working on the Inclusive Methodist Church strategy are supported by a diverse group of skilled and committed people with the relevant experience and understanding to develop the plans and to report back to the Conference with updates and recommendations;**
- (iv) recognised that the connexional leadership of the church, the Chairs of District, lay workers and Superintendents, as well as its own members, do not sufficiently reflect the diversity which is present within our Connexion. The Conference, therefore, seeks a greater commitment to working to overcome this lack of diverse representation;**
- (v) called on all Methodist ministers and members to engage properly in their own contexts, without fear or favour to confront and challenge all racism and other forms of unjust discrimination that the day may come when our actions, as well as our words, show that 'racism is a denial of the gospel';**

(vi) directed every Circuit to convene a forum for reflection, conversation and planning as to how the actions in (v) may be carried out in each local context.

22/9. The Conference suspended Standing Order 336 for the year 2020/2021.

22/9a. The Conference noted that the work referred to in Notice of Motion 2018/204 will be reported to the Conference of 2021 and directed that it be incorporated into the Inclusive Methodist Church strategy.

SECTION L

METHODIST CHURCH HOUSE

1. The Council received a report from the Strategy and Resources Committee, which updated the Council in respect of the anticipated costs of the rebuild of Methodist Church House.
2. In the light of the current situation, the Council agreed the following:
 - i. The project sub-committee is disbanded;
 - ii. The Property Development Committee (PDC) 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.

*****RESOLUTION**

22/10. The Conference received the Report.

SECTION M

MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

The Council received a report on the work of the Ministries Committee.

The Learning Institutions and Continuing Development in Ministry (CDiM)

1. One of the Ministries Committee's responsibilities is to report on the relationship with The Queen's Foundation and Cliff College. The Committee reviewed a draft partnership agreement with the Queen's Foundation which was given final approval by the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) in September. The Committee received annual reports from the two institutions in September which were highly favourable.
2. *Cliff College* - Despite the current challenges for smaller institutions in higher education, Cliff has gained a good outcome from its most recent QAA inspection. It enjoys a strong relationship with the University of Manchester and continues to provide a suite of accredited degree programmes at every level, in addition to its work in and emphasis on non-accredited courses for those in current ministry contexts. It has begun to celebrate its own faculty's specialisms, for instance in establishing new centres with a focus on pneumatology, and gender. In the last year, there has been a particular focus on expanding the range of the college's engagement overseas in capacity-building and theological training, particularly within the global Methodist family. The TheologyX online learning platform is an attractive and user-friendly resource at the cutting edge of such technology, and has been enthusiastically taken up by the college's partners as relationships and shared projects have developed.

3. *The Queen's Foundation* - The work of The Queen's Foundation is spread across a number of centres, in all of which the Methodist Church participates and from all of which it draws great benefit. The Centre for Ministerial Formation includes those Methodist students (about half of the total) accepted as student ministers for initial training, who learn and undergo that formation in community with their Anglican counterparts in a fully ecumenical setting. The Centre for Continuing Ministerial Development holds the ongoing work being done with Methodist probationer ministers in their studies, and there is real growth in this area of work, as almost all leaving students choose to continue on this new pathway, mostly completing their BA in Theology, Ministry and Mission. The new Centre for Black Theology is in the vanguard of such scholarly and formative work in the nation, and has grown significantly in the last year. It represents an invaluable resource for the Methodist Church in its own work of theological reflection, inclusion, and racial justice. The Foundation's engagement with scholarship and doctoral work through its research centre is also critical, through its pioneering partnership with Free University of Amsterdam, one of the finest theological faculties in the world. In addition, there is also a deepening engagement with global Christianity, reflecting the Foundation's historic commitments and deep experience in fostering exchange, capacity building and scholarly encounter.
4. In 2019/2020, the six-yearly inspection on behalf of the churches, the Periodic External Review, took place, and The Queen's Foundation was awarded the highest category possible, an unqualified 'confidence' verdict, which is a relatively rare outcome. The inspectors expressed their admiration of the integrity and authenticity of the community of scholarship and prayer which they experienced, of the attentiveness and commitment of staff, and of the extent to which the Foundation's commitments to inclusion, student welfare and theological rigour were deeply rooted in the common life of the college. This is all a great tribute to the hard work of the staff and tutors, and in particular that of the Principal, David Hewlett. David retires in the summer of 2020 after long, dedicated and loving service to the college, to the churches, and in particular to staff and students, whose flourishing he has always sought and fostered. The Church is immensely grateful for his wisdom, his insight, his commitment to justice, peace and ecumenical mission, and his generosity in sharing his gifts and graces with humility and kindness. The Council joins the Ministries Committee in wishing him every blessing in the next stage of his own discipleship.
5. *The Church Ministry Apprenticeship Standard* - Significant work has been undertaken with ecumenical partners on the development of an Apprenticeship Standard for local, lay ministry. It was hoped that the Church Ministry Apprenticeship Standard would give opportunities for lay people, who have significant roles in the life of the Church, to explore ministry and to study for an apprenticeship degree. The standard has been benchmarked against the Common Awards (validated by the University of Durham) and Cliff College (validated by the University of Manchester) in developing a degree programme. However, the Government has set the funding band at £13,000 per apprentice which is a low level, and it would be difficult to top this up to a viable level, even with some support from levy funds. Following a meeting with staff at The Queen's Foundation and Cliff College in November, it was concluded that there is no current possibility of pursuing the Church Ministry Standard because of the way the Government has set the funding band. We will join with others in appealing the Government decision but, for the time being, the Committee regrets to say there is no viable way forward.
6. The Committee has received reports on Continuing Development in Ministry (CDiM) looking at relationships with the other institutions such as at Wesley House Cambridge and St John's College Durham in the light of the training review. The strategy includes proposals for each minister to have an individual CDiM portfolio, for connexional funding to support the CDiM of ministers, and for new partnership agreements with the institutions through which development opportunities are available.
7. *HE Awards criteria, new ways of working* - In Summer 2019, the Director of Learning for Ministry and the Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee assumed responsibility for overseeing the awarding of Methodist Church grants to those, either ministers or full-time lay employees (but currently excluding Network Officers), pursuing advanced degrees at master's and doctoral level. The Committee has

approved changes to encourage broader uptake of the awards, to enable more expenditure of the budget allocated to them, and to level out some of the discrepancies between lay and ordained in how the monies are spent. The Committee agreed that the normal maximum for doctoral research be increased to £3,500. The Committee also approved a second grant application round in the autumn for other types of further education other than master's or doctoral work, as funds allow.

8. The Ministries Committee is alert to the varying costs of courses and accredited programmes and to the varying level of resources that individual ministers have and therefore proposed a revision of Standing Order 745(4)(b), clauses (ii) and (iii), which currently set limits on the proportion of district and connexional funds which may be applied for towards a higher degree, and stipulate that an individual *must* contribute at least one third of the funds for any piece of continuing development which they choose to undertake (rather than that which is required). This now seems to present an unnecessary obstacle for some, and takes no account of ministers' varying circumstances and means.

Clause 4 (b), sections (ii) and (iii) of SO 745 as amended would read:

(ii) where undertaking a course of study leading to a higher education award, the person concerned may apply for a grant of up to one third of the fees both from the relevant District and from connexional funds;

(iii) in all other cases, the person concerned may apply for a financial contribution towards the cost of such study, training or development, these costs being borne in the proportions agreed in each individual case between connexional funds, the relevant District and the person concerned, ~~subject to the requirement that the person concerned shall be responsible for at least one third of the costs.~~

9. *Ministry in Local Appointment (MLA)* - The Committee received some research by the Revd Sue Wigham on the stories of those who candidated and were initially stationed as MLA. The committee's consideration of this has fed into its contribution to the Changing Patterns of Ministry report to the 2020 Conference.
10. *Church Stewards and Lay Leadership* – With reference to Notice of Motion 2018/109, a new Church Stewards' Handbook has now been completed and this is available on the website, offering a greater level of clarity and guidance on how Standing Order 634 should be interpreted. The Committee requested that the Changing Patterns of Ministry group review Standing Order 634 in consultation with the Law and Polity Committee.

New Places for New People

11. The Committee has been in receipt of regular reports on the development of the Evangelism and Growth strategy. The Ministries Committee approved the initial membership of the New Places for New People Guiding Team which is the successor body to the Fresh Expressions Guiding Team.

Lay Ministries

12. The following memorial was brought to the 2019 Conference, and the reply shown below was adopted:

M24 Process of submitting portfolios for worship leading and preaching

The Wirral (18/9) Circuit Meeting (Present: 59; Voting: 53 for, 0 against) requests the Conference to direct that the process of submission of portfolios for the Worship: Leading & Preaching course includes the facility to submit in hard copy as an alternative to the current requirement to upload digital documents to Moodle. This request arises for three reasons;

First, the degree of technology literacy required. We are finding, especially in this Circuit, and partly due to the age demographics of those currently on trial or training as worship leaders, that many are really struggling, not with the course material and content, but with the technology.

Secondly, a significant number of those training as Worship Leaders are opting not to submit a portfolio. Again this is not because of the work, but because of difficulties with the technology, thus limiting the scope of their recognition solely to their Local Church.

Thirdly, we consider it discriminatory to insist on presentation of portfolios being by electronic means, given that many people (across many age and socio-economic groups) do not have personal IT facilities or the funds with which to obtain them or maintain broadband internet. Our experience of offering support through making facilities available in churches etc is that this is not conducive to effective personal study.

Reply

The Conference thanks the Wirral Circuit for its memorial and for its commitment to help worship leaders and local preachers proclaim the good news.

Worship: Leading & Preaching was conceived and has been developed as a blended learning course, delivered (and regularly updated) online. Being online enables much of the content of the course to be presented as video, audio or pictorial material, which would not be possible in a paper-based format. We recognise that for some computer technology can be a barrier. With this in mind Ministries: Vocations and Worship staff are working hard to develop the course to make it easier for those who are less familiar with computers to access the materials, as part of this; a new website design will be introduced in the autumn.

In parallel with most educational institutions portfolio submission is required to be submitted electronically. This ensures that materials can be checked for originality, and that assessment and moderation can be carried out efficiently and fairly and ensure that we are using the church's resources well. This applies particularly to the essential forms and cover sheets that contain the core reflections of the student. However, it is acceptable for some items in portfolios to be handwritten, provided a scanned copy is made to include in the portfolio for moderation. This process, if facilitated by the Circuit should not interrupt the process of personal study.

The Conference takes seriously any concerns about discrimination. The Conference accepts that there are some who for various reasons will find it difficult to undertake Worship: Leading & Preaching without additional financial or practical support. Recognising that is not simply the submission of portfolio material that depends on access to the internet and computer equipment, the Conference declines the memorial but refers the issues contained within it to the Ministries Committee and to the Board of Studies, asking

- that guidance be produced for Circuits about practical assistance for those who find it difficult to study and submit through electronic media;*
- that Circuits be made aware of possible sources of funding to support those unable to buy equipment;*
- that the electronic platforms used are as accessible as they can be to those with particular needs and varying levels of experience in using computers.*

The Conference referred to the Ministries Committee the issues contained in the Memorial, about the difficulties experienced by some in studying through electronic media, and directed the Committee to make Circuits aware of funding sources for equipment and to ensure that electronic platforms are as accessible as they can be. The Committee reported to the Council that improvements have been made and that the Local Preachers' Board of Studies has directed a root and branch review of both the assessment and submission process and the practicalities of the Moodle system.

13. The following memorial was brought to the 2019 Conference, and the reply shown below was adopted:

M25 Development of Worship Leaders and Preachers

The Yorkshire North and East District Synod, Representative Session (Present: 145; Voting: 110 for, 20 against) acknowledges the significant investment of resources in developing Worship: Leading & Preaching as the training course for local preachers and worship leaders. It also notes the recent introduction of peer review for local preachers, which has clarified and codified a requirement for mutual support, accountability and lifelong learning, as well as the requirement to attend an annual service of re-affirmation. The enhanced training for worship leaders has enabled them to develop and ground their call.

The Synod acknowledges and celebrates the ongoing and vital ministry of local preachers and worship leaders in delivering worship and in contributing in many other ways to local church and circuit life. It pays tribute to all those who have responded and continue to respond to God's call, recognising the significant cost to themselves and their families.

Noting also the need for new worship leaders and preachers, the Synod urges the Conference to ensure that their work is made more visible and central within the life of the Connexion and to enhance the ways that they are valued and affirmed by the Connexion as follows:

- 1. To require an annual report to the Conference from the Connexional Officer responsible to the Ministries Committee for the development of the ministry of worship leaders and local preachers which should include:
 - a. an account of the development, activities and reflections of local preachers and worship leaders as reported by the returns submitted by Local Preachers' Meeting Secretaries.*
 - b. updates on the continuing refinement and development of Worship: Leading & Preaching.*
 - c. reflections on the impact of peer review.**
- 2. To require the report also to indicate:
 - a. the numbers of worship leaders and local preachers in training, numbers successfully submitting portfolios A and B, and the numbers admitted as local preachers.*
 - b. the names of those to whom long-service certificates have been awarded and those local preachers who have died in the previous year.**

Reply

The Conference thanks the Yorkshire North and East District Synod for its memorial and for their wish to celebrate the ministry of worship leaders and local preachers.

The Conference welcomes the suggestion that the work of worship leaders and local preachers, and in particular their initial training and ongoing development will be reported to the Conference. In future, this information should be included in the reports of the Ministries Committee to the Council.

The information requested in the memorial will be made available through the quarterly Local Preachers' and Worship Leaders' News and other communications.

The Conference accepts the memorial.

The Ministries Committee accordingly reports as follows:

As of January 2020, there were 6,171 active local preachers recorded on the connexional database.

Concerning those in training:

- 201 portfolios were successfully completed on the Worship: Leading & Preaching course in 2019.
- Of these, 31 were from Worship Leaders, indicating that 31 new Worship Leaders had completed the WL training (modules 1 – 4). 88 were Portfolio LPA, (modules 1 – 4), and 82 were Portfolio LPB, indicating completion of LP training.
- During the year, 104 new students enrolled as Worship Leaders, and 167 as Local Preachers.
- On the Faith & Worship course, 111 portfolios were assessed in 2019 (four are submitted during the entire course). Of these 51 were for Section D, which provides an approximation of those who completed the course during the year.
- 103 new Local Preachers were recognised during the year, as indicated by the number of President’s Letters requested.

The number of local preachers reported to have died was 235. Further details are available from the conferenceoffice@methodistchurch.org.uk. This and other information requested in the memorial will be made available through the quarterly *Local Preachers’ and Worship Leaders’ News* and other communications.

14. *Local Preachers Board of Studies* - The Council received a report on the revised Terms of Reference which clarify that the Board reports to the Ministries Committee annually.
15. *Necessitous Local Preachers Fund (NLPF)* - The Council directed the Ministries Committee to take over the administration of this fund, and relationships have proved more complex than originally thought. The Secretary of the Conference has met with representatives from the Board of Leaders and Worship and Preachers’ Trust (LWPT) and work is ongoing to enable the NLPF to be used.

Matters Relating to Ordained Ministry

16. *Chinese Ministry M19, 20 (2019)* - The Conference directed the Ministries Committee to work with the Circuit-Based Learning Pathway working group to investigate where appropriate possibilities might be found to nurture the call to presbyteral and diaconal ministry in Chinese and other ethnically based congregations. A questionnaire survey was sent out over the summer and a meeting of the Chinese congregation leaders took place in November to discuss how vocations are being nurtured in those fellowship groups. It was agreed by the participants that three working groups would be formed to work on the following themes: Vocations for the different forms of ministry, including ordained ministry; Youth Ministry Group; Local Preachers and Worship Leader training.
17. The following memorial was brought to the 2019 Conference, and the reply shown below was adopted:

M23 Obituaries

The Isle of Man Synod, Representative Session (Present: 47; Voting: unanimous) welcomes the report received by the 2018 Conference on Ministry in the Methodist Church, and the affirmation of the ministry of the whole people of God contained within it. We note however that when the Conference publishes obituaries for presbyters and deacons, the historic form of language used at the conclusion of each includes the phrase “in the xxx year of their ministry”, counting from the year of that person’s ordination.

Recognising that many of our presbyters and deacons enter ordained ministry having previously served in lay ministry as local preachers, or with experience of being in other forms of lay ministry whether formally employed by the church or not, counting back to a date of ordination to determine the ‘year of their ministry’ stands at odds against our belief in the ministry of the whole people of God.

We therefore request that the Conference affirms its belief that many of our presbyters and deacons have had an equally valid and valued period of ministry prior to their ordination, and

directs that for the sake of clarity on this matter, future obituaries conclude with the modified statement “In the xxx year of their ordained ministry” and encourages other publications bearing the Methodist name to follow suit.

Reply

The Conference thanks the Isle of Man District for its memorial and for its prayerful engagement with the report on Ministry in the Methodist Church. The Conference concurs that the phrase at the end of the obituary does appear to offer a more limited definition of the word ‘ministry’ than that which the report invites us to celebrate.

The obituaries recognise that the ordained offer particular and sometimes sacrificial service to the Church and that a phase of that ministry begins at the point that a minister enters her or his first appointment. The solution that the District offers to clarify this point would require a revision of the current practice. The ‘nth year of her/his ministry’ is calculated from the year of travel shown in the Minutes, which is not usually the year in which the presbyter or deacon was ordained but commonly that in which she or he was first stationed. A more exact phraseology might be ‘in the nth year of their presbyteral/diaconal ministry’.

The question is whether such a change is really necessary. Although we affirm the ministry of the whole people of God, it is still our common parlance to speak of both presbyters and deacons as ‘ministers’, following the usage of Signalling Vocation, Clarifying Identity (2012 Conference, following the adoption of the proposals by the 2008 Conference). In short, we know what we mean by the phrase which has been used in this context for many years, before and after the Conference adopted ‘The Ministry of the People of God’ in 1988.

The Conference accepts that this is a practice that would benefit from review and refers this memorial to the Ministries Committee directing it to consult with the Faith and Order Committee and to make a recommendation to the Conference of 2021.

In response to Memorial 23/2019, the Committee recommended a revision of the phrase which appears at the end of obituaries.

18. *Obituaries for Student Ministers (SO 153 and SO 182)* – the Committee noted a difference in CPD between the Standing Orders for presbyteral and diaconal obituaries. While student deacons are given an obituary, student presbyters are not. The Council therefore recommends an addition to SO 153(3):

153 Obituaries.

[...]

(3) The Secretary of the Conference shall each year receive from the secretaries of the Synods the obituaries of deceased presbyters and presbyteral probationers which have been approved by the Synods, and from circuit Superintendents those of presbyters and presbyteral probationers who have died subsequently. ***In the case of a student presbyter’s death, the Principal of the relevant training institution will be responsible for having an obituary produced and sending it to the Secretary.*** The Secretary of the Conference shall, if necessary, revise the obituaries and shall include them in the Agenda. They shall be presented to the Conference in its Presbyteral Session for adoption, with any further revision accepted by the Conference.

19. The Committee has been aware of a number of concerns around *Well-being in Ordained Ministry*. A task group has been established which will bring together a number of areas of work and report to the September 2020 meeting of the Ministries Committee.
20. The Committee reported to the Council that it had
- agreed September 2020 as the date from which probationers would be assessed against revised competencies

- clarified the criteria used by the Manses Group to give permission for ministers to live in their own homes
- agreed a revised grading system for candidates' portfolios
- received a report on the work with Fellowship Group Chaplains.

Ministers of other Conferences and Churches

21. *Authorised to Serve status* - The Committee reported that it had noted some issues relating specifically to the category of 'Authorised to serve'; the Council therefore recommends a change to the Standing Order 732:

732 Persons Recognised and Regarded as Presbyters or Deacons. [...]

(3) [...]

(b) Persons seeking to be so specified must in the case of ~~ministers~~ presbyters have been ordained to the ministry of word and sacraments in a church whose ministry is recognised by the Methodist Church or in the case of deacons have been ordained to the diaconate in an autonomous conference or in a church whose diaconate is recognised by the Methodist Church.

[...]

(d) All such applications shall be made ~~in the case of ministers~~ to the Secretary of the Conference, and in the case of deacons also to the Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order ~~and the Secretary of the Conference~~, and in either case by the date annually determined by the Ministerial Candidates Selection Committee under Standing Order 730(2)(a) or (b), as applicable.

The Council however notes that further work is needed in this area. A review group has been established to look at the issues and to bring proposals for further changes to SO 732. A guidance note on the use of 'Authorised to Serve' status has been added to the website as an interim measure while other decisions are pending.

22. The Council directed that the Oversight Committee for Ministers of Other Conferences and Churches be disbanded, as several new processes and procedures (including the introduction of pastoral supervision for all presbyters and deacons) have been put in place since it was established and its work is now adequately performed elsewhere.

***RESOLUTIONS

22/11. The Conference received the Report.

22/12. The Conference amended Standing Order 745(4)(b) as laid out in the Report.

22/13. The Conference amended 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.*"

22/14. The Conference amended Standing Order 153 as laid out in the Report.

22/15. The Conference amended Standing Order 732 as laid out in the Report.

SECTION N

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE: CHANGES TO STANDING ORDERS AND REGULATIONS ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE

In April 2019, the Council received a paper from the Safeguarding Committee, recommending changes to Standing Order 010 and to Book VI, Part 4, 'the Church and Sex Offenders: Procedures Necessary for Offenders to be Involved in a Church Community.'

By means of resolution 52/2, the Council, notwithstanding any final authority of the Conference to approve guidance published in the *Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church*, delegated authority to the Chair and Secretary of the Council, and the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice to approve the final text of new procedures and guidance [including Book VI, Part 4]. The rationale was to update Book 6, Part 4 in light of changes in Safeguarding Procedure in recent years, including the management of the involvement of persons who had not been convicted of sexual offences, but who nonetheless perpetrated abuse and posed a safeguarding risk.

By means of resolution 52/3, the Council directed the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice, following consultation with the Committee, to present to the Conference any amendments required as a result of the Committee's recommendation that those barred by the Disclosure and Barring Service from working with vulnerable adults and children be listed as a named category in Standing Order 010(2)(ii). Such persons would therefore automatically be subject to a safeguarding contract, without a Safeguarding Panel having to determine this. As such, the changes required to Book VI, Part 4 gave rise to consequential amendments to Standing Orders 690 and 690A, which address the involvement of those subject to safeguarding concerns in the life of a Local Church.

Given the departure of the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice in December 2019, the consultation required under the Resolution took place between a member of the Law and Polity Committee and a member of the Safeguarding Committee.

***RESOLUTIONS

22/16. The Conference received the Report.

22/17. The Conference amended Standing Orders as below.

22/18. The Conference approved the new text of Book VI, Part 4 as below.

[Daily Record 6/13]

Standing Order 010

010 Qualification for Appointment. (1) [Unchanged].

(2) Subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (or any statutory modification or re-enactment thereof for the time being in force and any regulations or orders made or having effect thereunder)

- (i) no person who has been convicted of or has received a simple or conditional caution from the police concerning an offence mentioned in Schedule 1 to the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 (as amended) or ***who is barred by the Disclosure and Barring service from work with children, young people or vulnerable adults or who the Safeguarding Committee concludes*** otherwise poses a risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults shall undertake work with children, young people or vulnerable adults in the life of the Church;
 - (ii) no person who has been convicted of or has received a simple or conditional caution from the police concerning an offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 or mentioned in Schedule 15 to the Criminal Justice Act 2003 ***or who is barred by the Disclosure and Barring service from work with children, young people or vulnerable adults*** or who is the subject of a risk assessment under Standing Order 237 as a result of which the Safeguarding Committee concludes that he or she presents a significant risk of serious harm to children, young people or vulnerable adults shall be appointed or reappointed to any office, post or responsibility or engaged or re-engaged under any contract to which this sub-clause applies unless authority for the appointment or employment has been obtained under clause (5) below.
- (3) unchanged

(4) Clause (2) above shall have effect in relation to persons in any jurisdiction within the home Districts other than England and Wales as if, in any such jurisdiction in which any of the legislative provisions there mentioned does not have effect, there were substituted a reference to the legislation, if any, of similar substance in force in that jurisdiction from time to time **and as if the reference to the Disclosure and Barring Service were a reference to the body in that jurisdiction, if any, with a comparable power of barring persons from work with children, young people or vulnerable adults.**

Standing Order 690

690 Arrangements for Involvement. (1) When a person:

- (i) who has been convicted of or has received a simple or conditional caution in respect of an offence referred to in Standing Order 010(2)(ii);
or
- (ii) in respect of whom the Safeguarding Committee has made a recommendation that clause (2) below should apply

worships in a Local Church or seeks to become involved in its life, he or she may only do so in accordance with the provisions of that clause (2) below.

(2) (a) The Local Church in question, acting by **the safeguarding officer for the relevant District in consultation with** the presbyter in pastoral charge **or circuit superintendent**, must establish a monitoring and support group, **including at least one member of the Local Church**, in accordance with the applicable policies and ~~practice guidance~~ **procedures** adopted by the Methodist Council from time to time for the purposes set out there and in this Standing Order.

(b) **The safeguarding officer, working with the** The group so established must consider the recommendations made in any risk assessment undertaken pursuant to Standing Order 237 and if no such risk assessment has been undertaken, **must carry out such assessment at the earliest opportunity** ~~will immediately refer the matter to a safeguarding officer as defined in Standing Order 236.~~

(bA) The **safeguarding officer working with the** group ~~will seek~~ **and seeking** to minimise the risk to others presented by the person concerned, and for that purpose will determine on what terms he or she may attend for worship and become involved in the life of the Local Church.

(c) [unchanged]

[(3) and (4) deleted; (5) and (6) unchanged.]

Standing Order 690A

690A Review of a Contract (1) [unchanged]

(2) The group shall consider at least once every three years, **but no earlier than two years and six months after the contract takes effect or after the latest previous consideration of the subject**, whether a new risk assessment is required to be undertaken to reassess the risk posed by the person concerned. **This timescale may be varied, but only by the appropriate connexional safeguarding officer.**

[(3) - (5) unchanged]

Standing Order 1125

1125 Possible Criminal Offences. (1) [unchanged]

(2) If in the view of the relevant Connexional Team member, the criminal offence to which the matters alleged amount or may amount is an offence mentioned in the First Schedule to the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 as currently in force **or is one which is included in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 or Schedule 15 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003** ~~section 1 of the Sexual Offences Act 1956~~ and (in either **any such** case) the offence if committed **is** against a person under 18 **or a vulnerable adult**, the relevant connexional member must report the matter to the police. **If the matters alleged relate to a minister or office holder (paid or voluntary) working with children or young people a report of the matter must be made by the relevant connexional Team member to the Local Authority Designated Officer or, if no such officer or equivalent office or body is appointed, to the local children's services in addition to being reported to the police.**

(2A) Clause (2) above shall have effect in relation to persons in any jurisdiction within the home Districts other than England and Wales as if, in any such jurisdiction in which any of the legislative provisions there mentioned does not have effect, there were substituted a reference to the legislation, if any, of similar substance in force in that jurisdiction from time to time.

[(3) to (7) unchanged]

Changes to Book VI, Part 4

Book VI Part 4

Part 4

The Church and Public Protection

Procedures Necessary to enable those who present a Safeguarding Risk to be Involved in a Church Community.

The Conference of 2000 adopted a report, *The Church and Sex Offenders*. Included within it, in the section on 'Practical Implications', was a set of suggested procedures (at Section 7b) to be followed where an offender seeks to be involved in a church community. The Conference resolved (Conference Agenda 2000, Resolution 38/3(a)) that the procedure set out in Section 7b of the report be adopted as the practice of the Methodist Church when a person who has been convicted of or has received a formal caution in respect of a sexual offence seeks to become part of a local church community. It also referred to the Methodist Council the question of whether the procedures set out in that section required to be set out in Standing Orders. In a further report upon the issues in 2002, the Methodist Council recommended that it would be appropriate for those procedures to be referred to in Standing Orders but included in full in this Guidance. The Conference of 2002 adopted that recommendation, and Section 7b is therefore reproduced below. Section 69 of Standing Orders deals with the subject and S.O. 690(4) refers to the procedures set out here. The 2008 Conference directed that the language of this Part be amended to make it gender-neutral, and again in 2012 to reflect the change of usage from 'minister' to 'presbyter'.

The 2017 Conference adopted the recommendation to replace Covenants of Care with Safeguarding Contracts for all those with proven and alleged sex and safeguarding offences. The Conference also adopted recommendations in the Covenant of Care report to introduce a formalised process for risk assessments and the maintenance of records and review of Safeguarding Contracts. Section 69 of Standing Orders should be read alongside the below procedure. Standing Order 237 sets out the process for assessment of risk.

Since the Conference of 2000, when procedures were put in place to facilitate the risk assessment, oversight and engagement of sex offenders in church activities, there has been significant development in the world of safeguarding both inside and outside the Church. The Methodist Church recognises that safeguarding provisions must now extend beyond sexual offences to the wider public protection agenda. For this reason, in 2017, the Methodist Council approved the extension of the requirement for safeguarding contracts under Standing Order 690 to include not only sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 but also those contained within Schedule 15 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. These offences are those which may be managed within Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) for statutory agencies.

Standing Orders 690 and 690A specify the arrangements for involvement not only of those convicted of or cautioned for offences but also of those who, following a risk assessment and a recommendation by the Safeguarding Committee, represent a significant risk of serious harm to children, young people or vulnerable adults. The term offender is no longer appropriate as safeguarding contracts may be applied whether or not the person has a conviction or caution for an offence.

For the protection of the whole church community, it is important that careful consideration and preparation is undertaken, prior to the engagement in church activities of a person deemed to be a risk to vulnerable groups. This will include exploring the circumstances of safeguarding concerns, identification of risks and the development of a safeguarding contract that is specific to the individual, their location

and the nature of their engagement with the Church. In all cases, the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance of the Methodist Church must be followed in the set-up and management of safeguarding contracts.

The Church recognises that any risk assessment process may involve the processing of personal special category and criminal data as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Therefore, it is important that the full procedures contained within the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church are followed at all stages of the process.

The implementation of a safeguarding contract will follow a 4-stage process with all stages undertaken consecutively. Each stage will inform the next to ensure that any safeguarding measures are proportionate, necessary and legitimate with regard to the specific risk presented by any individual.

The 4 stages are as follows:

- a) Collation of information from relevant sources**
- b) Identification of risks from that information**
- c) Consideration of current safeguarding practices and mitigating factors**
- d) Drafting of a contract which addresses the risks identified and makes provision for positive support in developing the person's engagement with the Church.**

The Safeguarding Officer for the relevant district (the DSO) will undertake the process on behalf of the Local Church but working closely with the presbyter in pastoral charge or circuit superintendent. They will liaise with statutory authorities in all cases to confirm relevant information and work in partnership with probation services and police where they have a supervisory role over the person who will enter the contract. Where the person is due to be released from prison, the DSO and presbyter will also liaise with the chaplain from that prison, in addition to the statutory agencies planning for reintegration into society.

A meeting will be held with the person who will enter the contract for the following purposes:

- a) To provide information about the process**
- b) To provide a privacy notice**
- c) To allow the person to offer their own perspective on the circumstances**
- d) To confirm the activities in which the person wishes to participate in the Church**
- e) To identify support networks already in place from family, friends, employment or volunteering and to consider new opportunities to engage in positive activities**

The presbyter in pastoral charge or circuit superintendent will work with the DSO to identify a chairperson and appropriate members for the Monitoring and Support Group (MSG). At least one member must be from the Local Church. Any members who have not undertaken this role before will only be appointed after a safe recruitment process and completion of a confidentiality notice. A briefing will be provided by the DSO before a new MSG is set up so that all parties have a clear understanding of the role and its responsibilities. All MSG members must attend specialist training to support their participation in the role.

The DSO will not be a member of the MSG so that they can be called upon both to provide independent advice and to undertake the review processes required by Standing Order 690A.

At all stages, recording of information must follow the procedures outlined in the Safeguarding Policy, Procedure and Guidance for the Methodist Church and use the forms provided for this purpose.

The following risk areas should be considered when identifying specific risks:

- Risks to survivors and those from vulnerable groups**
- Risks to those who engage with the Church and provide support to the person entering a contract**
- Risks posed to the person entering a contract and their family (disclosure, health etc.)**
- Risks to the wider community using church facilities**

- **Risks to the Church (including compliance with legislation, policy & procedure, data protection, reputation etc).**

All conditions contained within safeguarding contracts must address specific, identified risks that relate to the individual's circumstances and engagement with the Church. Safeguarding contracts should include one or more conditions that demonstrate the Church's commitment to supporting the person to develop positive future goals through their interaction with the Church. The contract must also demonstrate the commitment of the signatories to follow the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church and relevant standing orders in the oversight of the contract.

SECTION O

CONNEXIONAL GRANTS COMMITTEE: GRANT RECLAIM POLICY

In October 2019, the Methodist Council received the Connexional Grants Committee's Annual Report. By means of Resolution 73/2, the Council approved the Committee's new property grant reclaim policy, requesting that the Law and Polity Committee draft any necessary **amendments to Standing Orders**.

The aim of the new policy was to ensure that property grants could be reclaimed where the benefits envisaged when the grant was made had not been achieved.

The following clawback percentages were proposed where churches are sold after completion of a property project:

- Within 0–5 years - 100%
- Within 6 years - 80%
- Within 7 years - 60%
- Within 8 years - 40%
- Within 9 years - 20%
- After 10 years - 0%

***RESOLUTIONS

22/19. The Conference receives the Report.

22/20. The Conference amends Standing Order 916 as follows:

916 Application of Capital Money. (1) Subject to clauses (2) and (3) below, capital money shall be applied to or for the following purposes and in the following order: –

(i) – (ii) [unchanged]

(iii) unless the treasurer or treasurers of the fund in question otherwise permit **direct**, in repayment **in whole or in part** of any grant at any time received in connection with the trust property from any connexional fund, **according to the date of the disposal, as follows, and so that any such direction may be for repayment of more or less than the amount shown, or of none:**

- **up to and including the 5th anniversary of the date of the grant: 100%**
- **thereafter up to and including the 6th anniversary: 80%**
- **thereafter up to and including the 7th anniversary: 60%**
- **thereafter up to and including the 8th anniversary: 40%**
- **thereafter up to and including the 9th anniversary: 20%**
- **thereafter: nil.**

(iv) – (vii) [unchanged]

(2), (3) [unchanged].

SECTION P
CHAIR OF THE CONFERENCE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

The Council noted that Mr David Walton had stepped down as chair of the Conference Business Committee, and nominates the Revd Loraine N Mellor to the Conference as chair of the Conference Business Committee for the next three Conferences (2020, 2021 and 2022).

Under the terms of SO 136, the Committee is chaired by a past President or past Vice-President and is appointed for three Conferences in the first instance. Mrs Mellor kindly stepped in at short notice to chair the Committee when it met in February, and again in May. She brings wide experience and understanding of the Conference, including as President in 2017/2018, and chairs meetings with wisdom, clarity and pastoral sensitivity. The Council commends the Revd Loraine N Mellor to the Conference to serve as chair of the Conference Business Committee for the next three years.

*****RESOLUTION**

22/21. The Conference appointed the Revd Loraine N Mellor as Chair of the Conference Business Committee for a period of three years, until the adjournment of the Conference of 2022.

[Daily Record 3/6]