

53. Methodist Council, part 3

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SECTION Q GENERAL REPORT (3)

The Council met in May and:

- agreed to a request for a sale of some land at Cliff College;
- made various nominations and appointments;
- agreed to recommend to the Conference, pursuant to SO 315(1), that the Revd Dr Barbara C Glasson be stationed to the Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education as a part-time Tutor for a period of five years from 1 September 2020;
- under Standing Order 315(2), agreed to recommend the extension of the Revd Dr Jane V Craske's appointment as Director of Methodist Formation at The Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education for a further period of five years from 1 September 2021;
- 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;
- noted that the World Methodist Conference in 2021 has been deferred to 2022, and that the United Methodist Church General Conference, scheduled for 2020, has been moved to 2021;
- noted the changes to the constitution of Epworth Old Rectory (Trust);
- received an update on a Methodist Way of Life, commended the material for study across the Connexion, and approved a timeline.

At each of the Council's meetings during the year, it has received an update from the Connexional Secretary concerning the Connexional Team. Along with the Strategy and Resources Committee, the Council has continued to express its support and concern for the Team, and asked that its thanks be conveyed to the staff who continue to work in very different and sometimes challenging ways.

***RESOLUTION

53/1. The Conference received the General Report of the Council.

SECTION R FINANCIAL ISSUES

Introduction

1. The Council received a paper with an initial view of the variety of financial issues facing the Church and their impact on the Connexional Central Services budget. The situation is a developing one and despite the uncertainty, some early conclusions could be drawn and actions prioritised.
2. The Council noted that the Conference would have before it the budget it had approved at its March meeting (prior to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic) and had previously agreed that this would still need to be the budget the Conference approved. However, the Council agreed that the information below be shared in preparation for a revised budget being presented to

the Council in October 2020. This would ensure that more accurate income figures would be available whilst the work on reducing expenditure is undertaken over the summer.

Investment Income

3. The Connexional Central Services Budget (CCSB) for 2019/2020 includes an income target of £3.3m across all funds for investment income. Given the warnings issued by many companies postponing or cancelling dividends, it is reasonable to assume a significant drop in investment income in the second half of this calendar year at least. It is not yet possible reliably to estimate the shortfall, but clearly a worst case scenario would see a £1.6m shortfall against the budget.
4. Whilst the spread of investment income is not totally proportionate to the fund balance (as different funds have different mixes of investments and cash), the fund balance is an approximate guide to the impact by fund. The investment income budget for the Methodist Church Fund (MCF) is just £142k for the year with a risk of a maximum shortfall of £80k by year end.
5. In terms of overall investment performance, the Central Finance Board has reported that the funds have outperformed their benchmarks, albeit with significant losses having been incurred.

Income Generating Centres

6. The Guy Chester Centre (GCC) makes a contribution to the CCSB of £350k per annum. Whilst it is not expected they will be able to make their contributions for the remainder of this year it is hoped that business will return to normal in the next academic year.
7. The Council had received a number of updates on the situation regarding The Methodist International Centre (MIC) (which trades as The Wesley Hotel). The interim support of a rent holiday of (up to) 12 months and a loan of up to £1m was agreed. This has now been put in place with the final loan figure being determined at £786k.
8. Ongoing monitoring of what the income and expenditure position of MIC is likely to be for 2019/2020 is in hand, as this directly affects the CCSB. However, as a minimum we anticipate being £1.7m below budgeted income levels. Should MIC make a loss in 2019/2020 this will reduce the profit that can be paid over as Gift Aid in 2020/2021. Work will continue with the directors and management of MIC to ensure we are aware of the changing situation for them.

Donations and Legacies

9. By their very nature, donations and legacies are unpredictable. Having already received a £1.9m legacy in 2019/2020, the legacy budget has exceeded the plan for the year. However, it had been anticipated that this legacy would be used to support the work in renewing *Our Calling* rather than to support general expenditure.
10. Donations to date are £0.8m. The full year budget is £4.8m. The pattern of donations is such that most of them are received in the second half of the connexional year. It is difficult to predict what might happen this year, given that churches may not be in as strong a position to make donations and that, if the restrictions are still in place, receipt of cheques will be problematic.

11. It is, therefore, too early to say where we may end up against the donations and legacy budgets, but assuming the £1.9m legacy is used for future spending priorities, there is a downside risk of up to a £2m shortfall.
12. The Council noted with thanks the increased donation from the Allchurches Trust (the grant giving body of Methodist Insurance).

Expenditure

13. To date there has been minimal additional expenditure consequent on the closedown of Methodist Church House (MCH). Given there are no meetings or events currently this could save c£150k per quarter. There will be further savings on travel expenses of volunteers and Team members.
14. In total any net expenditure savings consequent of the closedown are likely to be immaterial in the context of the loss of income. Assuming a phased return to MCH from September, the total savings could be c£0.5m.

Grants

15. The Council took the decision, on the advice of the Strategy and Resources Committee, noting the financial pressures across the Connexion, and in the context that next year's fund may be significantly reduced in value, to suspend the current grants award round for Mission in Britain and Property Grants. Arrangements were made to ensure all are aware of this.

Stipends and Payroll Bureau

16. The payment of Stipends and Payroll through the central bureau is not based on the ability to pay. Whilst the cash collection takes place ahead of the payroll run, churches or Circuits not having sufficient funds does not delay payments to ministers and lay employees. As a consequence of the current process, any defaults are covered by the MCF until such time as funds are reimbursed. The current debt levels are c£150k. Clearly, if there were significant defaults due to the current financial situation, this would leave Connexional Funds very stretched in covering the cash shortfall. The total bureau and stipend payments are £6m per month.
17. Given the level of risk that is being carried by the Connexional Funds it would be helpful to understand the level of risk to future levels of defaulting by Circuits and other employers. Any process for resolving issues of default need to be dealt with by the District first and must involve the District Chair at an appropriate stage.

Financial problems for churches and Circuits

18. There have been anecdotal reports of churches unable to meet their financial commitments as a result of a loss of collections and rental income. Given that all charities are expected to have a reserves policy it might have been reasonable to assume each church would be able to withstand a three-month loss of income.
19. There are additional concerns that some churches will simply not reopen post the pandemic or that church attendance will be so reduced across the Connexion that the current expenditure levels across the Church will not be sustainable.

20. A number of people have suggested that the District Assessment be suspended or reduced or that in some other way relief be given over the current period. The total District Assessment is £1.1m per month. The total level of money in the CFB deposit fund is estimated to be c£360m with c£270m of this relating to individual churches, Circuits and Districts. However, it is self-evident from this that collectively the Church does not have a financial problem in meeting the MCF District Assessment.
21. As the accounts of all the churches, Circuits and Districts are not reported to the Connexional Team, it has not been possible to put a figure on the total turnover of the Connexion. However, some estimates put it at around £100m per annum. Therefore, three months of total spend across the whole Church still accounts for less than 10% of the monies in the Central Finance Board (CFB) deposit fund. This obviously excludes all the other assets the Church holds, eg, property, investments, and cash that is not invested with the CFB.
22. The challenge for the Church is to ensure that money is moved around to support churches from Circuits which are blessed with more resource to those who have less; for many Districts this work is well underway. Any church that is unable to cope in the short term probably has underlying financial issues that should already be reflected in the Circuit's Mission Plan. Over the longer term the challenge will be to rebuild the reserves where they have fallen below a sensible reserves policy level. However, if the estimate of total turnover at £100m is approximately accurate, it would appear the Church's reserves (as reflected in the CFB deposit fund) are currently far in excess of a sensible level.
23. A meeting of District Treasurers was held with the Director of Finance and Resources and the Connexional Treasurer to discuss the issues raised by the pandemic and to share good practice. Many Districts are well advanced in assessing the financial health of their churches and Circuits, some with cash forecasts through to the end of August. Most treasurers were confident that their Circuits would be able to meet commitments through to the end of August, though in many cases this includes using Circuit/District Advance Funds, reprioritised grant giving and/or the transfer of resources between Circuits. However, most treasurers were very concerned about their financial position should the situation continue beyond August.

Conclusions

24. The CCSB will be materially overspent at the year-end compared with the budget that was adopted by the 2019 Conference.
25. Fund balances as at 1 September 2020 will be below previously expected levels and next year's income is uncertain.
26. Funding of the *God For All* strategy was predicated on spending down to reserve levels and applying the full amount of the £1.9m legacy to this work. This is no longer possible and the Council agreed a way ahead for this spending which is contained in Section T below.
27. Revised budget envelopes will be developed to demonstrate how the Connexional Funds can return to reserve levels over the next three years. This will require reductions in the underlying CCSB.
28. Money held in the CFB deposit fund is more than sufficient to cover short term reductions in income to churches and Circuits. No relief should be offered on the payment of the District

Assessment. There are also sufficient resources to allow time for churches and Circuits to discern what an affordable shape of ministry is and to implement any consequent changes.

29. Further discussion is required to determine if an underlying reduction in District Assessment is required to support the wider Connexion in the coming few years.
30. Consideration should be given as to if and how the Council obtains financial information from individual organisations. This may include a change in Standing Orders to require CFB and TMCP to share information on balances held by organisations under the control of the Methodist Conference. This information would assist in financial resilience planning.
31. Further discussion is required to determine the role of the Methodist Council in having a financial resilience plan for the future.
32. With work currently underway to review all income and expenditure for 2020/2021 it is recommended that we approach the next connexional year cautiously in terms of spending until we know the outcome of the situation on our finances. As far as possible new work should not be instigated and routine activities should be examined to assess if one year off from these can be borne or if they can be carried out in less cost intensive ways (online meetings continuing, for example). This will essentially enable us to reduce planned spending from reserves (with the exception of the World Mission Fund) and to view the budget as being capped for the year, but also to seek to reduce planned expenditure where we can.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

53/2. The Conference received the Report.

53/3. The Conference commended the planned review of the proposed budget for 2020/2021 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.**

53/4. The Conference directed the Council to oversee a review of the financial impact of COVID-19 on the Church in order to enable future financial resilience and support financial planning across the Connexion.

53/5. The Conference directed the Council 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.

53/6. The Conference directed the Council to approve a revised budget for 2020/2021 as soon as is practicable.

SECTION 5

REFOCUSING *GOD FOR ALL* IN THE LIGHT OF COVID-19

Introduction and continued commitment

1. The Council received an update concerning *God for All: The Connexional Strategy for Evangelism and Growth*, which the Conference has before it in Volume One of the Agenda (item 4).
2. *God for All* describes the “foundational orientations and key programmes” that “...by God’s grace, will help the Methodist Church deepen our commitment to be a growing, evangelistic, justice-seeking, inclusive church of gospel people who speak of, listen for, and live out the goodness of God – so that new people become disciples of Jesus Christ and committed Methodists experience a deepening of faith”. The strategy detailed a proposed *God For All* funding package totalling £20 million in new spending over the first five years (2020/2021 – 2024/2025) of the strategy to support the significant shifts required to begin to embed the strategy.
3. The pandemic crisis is now the context in which the Church lives out its bold missional commitments. The proposed strategic elements were named as crucial before the crisis – they came from an extensive consultation across the Connexion – and they will be even more crucial throughout and beyond this crisis.

Refocused planning

4. That said, taking into consideration the unprecedented global uncertainty and the unexpected loss of a very significant amount of money from the Methodist funds that had originally been identified as primary funding sources, it has been necessary to refocus the work and redraw the funding expectations for the connexional year 2020/2021.
5. The Council therefore proposes a shift from £3,581,278 – the original proposed costs for 2020/2021 – to £959,468 for the first year of the strategy (a 73% decrease in spending), and provides some background on the rationale for and process of determining the recommended shift.
6. It is important to note that approximately 50% of this revised costings’ figure is made up from the current salaries, oncosts, and basic team budget of the current Evangelism and Growth staff; approximately 20% of this figure is the continuing existing costs for other teams’ joined-up programmes and/or budgets that have been in part redesigned with an evangelism orientation (eg, Young Adult Internships); and approximately 30% of this figure is the proposed new spending in the first year of the strategy.
7. The cut in overall proposed spending for 2020/2021 was accomplished generally by (1) transitioning most planned physical gatherings for key programmes and pathways into virtual meetings and (2) reworking the *New Places for New People* (NPNP) and *Church at the Margins* (CaM) funding process.

New spending

8. The proposed new spending, even in unexpected and uncertain times, is important to inaugurate the strategy and to signal the Methodist Church’s affirmation of it as an imperative way forward for vibrant mission and ministry in the 21st century.
9. This new spending for 2020/2021 is sourced from drawing down existing reserves, not from ceasing existing programmes in other areas of the Connexion nor from relying on assessments.

10. The new spending seeks to start rooting the core areas of the *God for All* strategy, even more important in the wake of the pandemic, to:
- Offer *A Methodist Way of Life* as rhythm of prayer and action, especially during prolonged physical distancing;
 - Increase the “missional readiness” of Methodist churches, Circuits, Districts, and leaders;
 - Expand key equipping pathways for Pioneers and Church Planters, Transformational Leaders, and Evangelists, all of whom will be even more crucial in the emerging “new normal”;
 - Commit to be a Church at – and from – the margins (almost 40% of all new spending will be on CaM projects);
 - Help prepare Districts and circuits for increased commitments to *Church at the Margins (CaM)* new Christian communities and *New Places for New People (NPNP)* projects in the seasons emerging from the pandemic;
 - Strengthen digital evangelism and testimony.

Proposed costings and funding

11. The new total proposed costings for the *God For All* strategy are displayed in figure 1 below. The new total proposed funding is displayed in figure 2 below. A breakdown of proposed costings by programme for the connexional year 2020/2021 is displayed in appendix 1.

Figure 1: Costings

Area	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total cost
Centred in God	17000	94000	42000	45000	30000	228000
Everyone an Evangelist	15000	115000	170000	225000	260000	785000
Transformational Leadership	19000	180000	180000	180000	180000	739000
New Places for New People	160494	984834	1221000	1286000	1654000	5306328
Church at the Margins	110000	1329000	1637000	1637000	2023000	6736000
Every Church a Growing Church	21475	166000	186000	206000	206000	785475
Young Evangelists, Pioneers and Leaders	90000	110000	110000	110000	110000	530000
Digital Presence: Digital Age Mission	25000	150000	150000	150000	150000	625000
Strategy Events	0	50000	0	100000	0	150000
Current staffing and programme costs	501499	542581	551686	560955	570285	2727006
Total	959468	3721415	4247686	4499955	5183285	18611809

Figure 2: Funding

Funding Source	Original proposal 2020/21 £	Revised proposal 2020/21 £	Comments
Mission in Britain	1,500,000	0	Reflects the longer lead time for making grants.
One interns/OPPS	400,000	85,000	Matches the reduced level of interns directed to the strategy.
Current budgets	528,784	528,784	
Legacy income	1,082,494	0	Recognises this funding has been committed against ongoing work.
Reserves		345,684	Slightly earlier draw down from reserves than planned.
Cliff college grant	70,000	0	
Total	3,581,278	959,468	

Preparation for district projects: *Church at the Margins* and *New Places for New People*

12. In the original costings for *God For All*, £15.2 million had been prioritised for starting new Christian communities through *Church at the Margins* (CaM) and *New Places for New People* (NPNP) – more than 75% of the overall new spending of the first five years of the strategy. As detailed in *God For All*, the overwhelming majority of these funds are for funding NPNP and CaM work with Districts.
13. Nearly £1.6m had been earmarked in the original 2020/2021 costings for the first tranche of match-funded district CaM and NPNP projects that were to be awarded *no earlier* than spring 2021.
14. In the wake of the pandemic, the following re-working for the first cycle of district projects preparation and funding is proposed:
 - The Evangelism and Growth team in 2020/2021 will (1) support District Leadership Teams to enable increased missional readiness for CaM and NPNP and (2) consult intensively with those Districts which have indicated a preference to join the “first tranche” of CaM and NPNP district projects as they prepare their robust project plans and associated funding claims.
 - The current “Preparation” stage of the draft NPNP/CaM funding process asks Districts to experiment with their proposed district project idea by spending a season casting vision, gathering initial stakeholders and leaders, and testing their missional assumptions on the ground.
 - “First tranche” Districts will be invited to engage that testing season in the first half of calendar year 2021. The proposed shifted 2020/2021 costing for GFA provides £10,000 for these 11 “first tranche” Districts to experiment in concrete, meaningful, and relational ways.
 - The full project plans for these first-tranche Districts will be due in June 2021 and will incorporate learnings from the testing season, note missional shifts and include more realistic and robust metrics for the high-impact projects. These funds would be awarded in the connexional year 2021/2022, reflecting a stabilizing market/funding source and enabling the Church to complete sensible planning for future funding.

- In summation, the funding of NPNP/CaM projects would start, as planned, in the connexional year 2020/2021 and build in a slightly longer (four to six months) experimentation phase, with starter funding of £10,000 per first tranche District, towards anticipated fuller funding in 2021/2022.
- Districts in tranches 2 and 3 would begin their project plans in 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 for anticipated fuller funding in 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 respectively.

Diligent planning for Years 2021/2022 and following

15. With a few exceptions, the proposed costings for Years 2 and beyond have not changed, on the understanding that it is more prudent to wait until the future financial position of the Church is clear before making any further decisions. This is in order not to preclude any elements of this bold and expansive strategy to deepen our commitment to be a growing, evangelistic, inclusive, justice-seeking Church of gospel people.
16. If the strategy is approved by the 2020 Conference, it is understood that the related funding approval would only apply to the (reduced) 2020/2021 budget and not the full five years.
17. If the 2020 Conference is so minded, then a reworked costings plan for years 2-5 of *God for All* could be brought to the 2021 Conference, based on a more solid financial analysis (which is simply not possible right now) and not merely market speculation.

Unexpected conditions, same direction of travel, same God

18. The conclusion of *God for All* states: “[T]his [strategy] is long-term, life-long work. [It] is not built on any quick fixes, magic resources, or short initiatives: it signals a direction of travel for deep Gospel transformation not only for the next three to five years, but also for the long-term future of our mission and whole life together. This expansive strategy will require much soul-searching, courageous decision-making, and significant structural change in the years ahead. Left to our own power, this work will be exhausting and impossible. Dependent on the power of God, it might just be life and joy for the Church and the world alike. We pray that it will be gift and blessing for all people who love God and want others to know the love of God, too.”
19. That truth has not changed in the wake of the pandemic. If anything, it has become clearer and more urgent.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

- 53/7. The Conference received the Report.**
- 53/8. The Conference adopted the revised budget for *God for All* for 2020/2021, in place of resolution 4/2.**
- 53/9. The Conference noted that the Council will bring a new budget proposal for 2021/22 to the 2021 Conference and directed that the Church in the Margins element of budget includes a commitment to fund social justice projects that reach the most marginalised in society using the current criteria for Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice, as in SO 1004.**

Appendix 1 – Proposed costings by programme for the connexional year 2020/2021

Stream/programme	Cost (£)
Centred in God	
Rooted in Prayer	2000
Developing Pathways for Growth	3000
A Methodist Way of Life	8000
Making Beautiful Worship: Beautiful Worship within the Gathered Community of Faith	0
Making Beautiful Worship: Beautiful Worship in Everyday Life	0
Theological Depth: Theological Reflection	0
Theological Depth: Theological Learning	4000
Everyone an Evangelist	
Embedding a Culture of Testimony	0
Equipping the Whole Church for Evangelism	2500
Training and Releasing Dedicated Evangelists	12500
Methodist National Evangelistic Witness	0
Transformational Leadership	
Transformational Leadership Learning Community	19000
Coaching for Transformation	0
Ministerial Training for Transformational Leadership and Evangelism	0
New Places for New People	
Partnerships with Districts and Circuits to Plant New Churches	50000
Expanding the Methodist Pioneering Pathway	41000
Multiplying Fresh Expressions	69494
Church at the Margins	
Church at the Margins	110000
Staffing	0
Every Church a Growing Church	
Mission Hubs	20000
Mission Planning Training and Grants	0
Partnership with Leading Your Church into Growth	1475
Core practices of growing churches	0
Young Evangelists, Pioneers and Leaders	
Young Evangelist Movement Training	5000
Internships in Evangelism, Pioneering, and Leadership	85000
Digital Presence: Digital Age Mission	
Basic Social Media and Website Training	0
Digital Evangelism Campaigns	15000
Digital Pioneering and Innovation Initiative	10000
Strategy Events	
Launch Gathering: Festival of Mission 2022	0
Midpoint Gathering 2024	0
Transition Gathering 2026	0
Current staffing and programme costs	
Continued employment of current staff	392,499

National Rural Officer becoming full-time	0
Current funds allocated to E&G	109,000
Total	959,468

SECTION T

3GENERATE 2020

The Council received a report on the Children and Youth Assembly:

Introduction

1. 3Generate is the name for the Children and Youth Assembly of the Methodist Church.
2. The Children and Youth Assembly must gather annually to “*provide an opportunity within the Methodist Church to hear from and be informed by children and young people*”, as outlined in Standing Order 250.
3. 3Generate was scheduled to take place at the NEC in Birmingham from 30 October to 1 November 2020.

Impact of COVID-19 pandemic and government advice

4. Due to government guidance on social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the uncertainty about when large gatherings can restart, it will not be possible for the 3Generate Children and Youth Assembly to be held at the NEC in 2020.
5. Plans are still underway for the 3Generate event to take place in the NEC in 2021.

An alternative to physical gathering

6. The Children, Youth and Family Ministries Team has begun planning for ‘3Generate 365’, which will launch in September 2020.
7. 3Generate 365 will provide the opportunity for children and young people from across the Connexion to gather virtually to explore the theme for this year of ‘2020 Vision’ and listen to what God is saying to them. 3Generate 365 will provide opportunities for children and young people to pray, listen, notice, discuss and explore how God may want them to be active as disciples in the world.
8. 3Generate 365 will also enable the voice of children and young people to be heard at the 2021 Conference and will provide opportunities for local groups to be a part of the planning for 3Generate 2021.
9. As lockdown eases, exploration of ways that Districts and regions can come together to provide opportunities for in-person gatherings will be undertaken.
10. These planned activities will require a high degree of connexional coordination, and so it is proposed that each District Chair nominate a ‘3Generate Ambassador’ from their District to enable this coordinated work to support and empower children and young people.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

53/10. The Conference received the Report.

53/11. The Conference commended the planning for *3Generate 365* in this time when physical gatherings are not possible, and recommended that each District Chair nominate a *3Generate Ambassador*.

SECTION U

STANDING ORDERS 728 AND 728A

The Council considered whether it would need to invoke the exceptional power of the Council under SO 211(1)(b) to suspend any Standing Orders in relation to the arrangements for the 2020 Conference in advance of the Conference meeting. It concluded that all the necessary suspensions could be made by the Conference itself.

However, there is one aspect where such a suspension was thought to be necessary and that it was wise for the Council to take action, rather than at the beginning of the Conference, because it relates to events which should happen in the period leading up to the Conference.

SO 728(3) requires the District Chair to arrange for a public service of testimony of all presbyteral probationers who are recommended to be received into Full Connexion with the Conference. SO 728A(2) requires that any diaconal probationers similarly recommended to be received shall be included in that service.

SO 728(4) requires the Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee to arrange a retreat for presbyteral ordinands to prepare themselves for reception into Full Connexion and ordination and SO 728A(3) makes the same provision for diaconal ordinands.

These are clearly not possible in the current circumstances, and this therefore is a situation where SO 211(1)(b) can be invoked. The salient points of that provision for present purposes are that “if at any time legislation is enacted in any territory within the Home Districts in consequence of which any Standing Orders are illegal, the council may, so far only as it judges necessary to meet any such defects within that territory before the next meeting of the Conference, revoke, amend, add to or suspend any such Standing Orders”.

The Council received Law and Polity advice to the effect that it would be necessary for the Council to adopt a resolution to enable the process which leads to reception into Full Connexion at the Conference to take place in due order, although the usual pre-requisites in the Standing Orders quoted above have not been able to be fulfilled. Arrangements are being made for the reception into Full Connexion to take place at the Conference in virtual form, but any ordination services will be postponed until physical gatherings of that kind are permitted. The Council therefore, in exercise of its powers under Standing Order 211(1)(b), has 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.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

53/12. The Conference received the Report.

53/13. The Conference [*hereby*] suspended Standing Order 250 to the close of the Conference of 2021 and made the following directions:

(i) the Youth President designated at the last Assembly shall take office from the 1st September 2020 and shall fulfil the role set out in clause (8) of that Standing Order;

(ii) the Youth President's Advisory Group shall continue to be constituted in accordance with and fulfil the responsibilities laid down in clause (9);

(iii) the elections of the Youth President-designate and the representatives to the Conference of 2021 and the nomination of the representatives to the Methodist Council for the connexional year from 1 September 2021 which would have been conducted under clauses (10) to (12) shall be conducted electronically in accordance with the following procedure:

(a) the persons entitled to vote shall be those who would have been eligible to be members of the Assembly under clauses (3) and (4) and who have fulfilled any requirements agreed under (b) below for registering in advance their intention to vote, and those persons shall constitute the Assembly for the connexional year 2020-2021 for the purposes of clause 14(2)(xA) of the Deed of Union;

(b) the procedures under which the elections are to be held shall be those agreed and overseen by a group consisting of: the Youth President's Advisory Group, together with those who were elected by the last Assembly as ecumenical representatives, British Youth Council representatives, and representatives for the World Methodist Council/Global Relationships and for Social Justice.

(iv) the persons eligible for election or nomination, as the case may be, under (iii) above shall be those who fulfil the requirements for eligibility under clauses (10) (other than (i)), (11) and (12) respectively;

(v) the Youth President may exercise the powers to appoint substitutes for representatives or nominees as provided for in clauses (11) and (12).

53/14. The Conference [hereby] suspended Standing Order 102(5) to the close of the Conference of 2021 and directed that the Youth President and the persons elected for that purpose in accordance with the procedures laid down by resolution 1 shall be the representatives to that Conference.