

Ministries Committee

Contact Name and Details	The Revd Gill M Newton, Chair of the Ministries Committee chair@sheffieldmethodist.org
Action Required	Decision
Resolutions	<p>35/1. The Council receives the report.</p> <p>35/2. The Council recommends to the Conference the proposed alternate wordings of the phrase which appears at the end of obituaries, where a minister has served in both orders.</p> <p>35/3. The Council approves the policy as set out in the report (paragraph 21), and accordingly requests the Law and Polity Committee to prepare amendments to SO 730, for presentation to the Conference.</p> <p>35/4. The Council directs that the HR immigration team is given authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) ensure that all ministers accepted from other Conferences and Churches to work in the Methodist Church in Britain are legally enabled to do so; ii) make arrangements for this in the most cost effective way. <p>35/5. The Council approves the policy that the Methodist Church in Britain no longer accepts candidates and probationers by transfer from other churches and accordingly requests the Law and Polity Committee to prepare the necessary amendments to Standing Orders for presentation to the 2021 Conference.</p> <p>35/6. The Council notes that the review of Section 73 of Standing Orders will now be brought to the 2022 Conference.</p> <p>35/7. The Council appoints a review group to undertake the review of Section 73 of Standing Orders (names to be tabled).</p> <p>35/8. The Council approves the policy that Districts be permitted to work together and form one Probationers Committee to serve more than one District, and accordingly requests the Law and Polity to prepare the necessary amendments to Standing Orders, for presentation to the Conference.</p>

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To bring the Methodist Council up to date with the work of the Ministries Committee.
Main Points	The Learning Institutions; Changing Patterns of Ministry; Lay Ministries; Vocations; Matters relating to Ordained Ministries; District Probationers Committee.

Ministries Committee

INTRODUCTION

1. The Ministries Committee is accountable through the Methodist Council to the Conference for:
 - (i) developing and supporting the processes relating to the oversight, accountability and professional development of those engaged in the ministries and offices of the Church;
 - (ii) developing and supporting programmes for nourishing, equipping and resourcing those engaged in the ministries and offices of the Church;
 - (iii) developing and supporting the Church's structures and resources for learning, training, scholarship, research and development;
 - (iv) in collaboration with other bodies, supporting the development of structures that enable the use of various forms of ministry as resources for mission within Circuits and Districts;
 - (v) overseeing connexional policy regarding its ordained ministries, including that relating to the processes for offering as a candidate, the oversight of students and probationers, and stationing, but without adjudicating on individual cases, which shall remain the task of the bodies appointed to fulfil that responsibility. (SO 32A1(2))To that end the Ministries Committee has met twice since the 2020 Conference on 9 September and 6 February, and will have a further meeting on 2 June.
2. The Committee reports on its work in the following sections:
 - The Learning Institutions and Continuing Development in Ministry (CDIM).
 - Changing Patterns of Ministry (CPM)
 - Lay Ministries
 - Vocations
 - Matters relating to Ordained Ministries
 - District Probationers Committee

THE LEARNING INSTITUTIONS AND CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT IN MINISTRY (CDIM)

3. One of the Ministries Committee's responsibilities is to report on the relationship with Cliff College and the Queen's Foundation. The Committee received annual reports from the two institutions at its September meeting, which were highly favourable.
4. **Cliff College**
 - 4.1 The vision of Cliff College is to be a beacon of excellence for training in mission and evangelism, serving the church especially in the UK, but also internationally. As the Methodist Church's college, working under the oversight of the Council through the Cliff Committee, and with deep roots in the Wesleyan theological tradition, it exists to train people in mission and evangelism. This training should impact all sections of the Church and serve the widest possible constituency. It achieves this through:
 - a range of validated courses and programmes with mission and evangelism at their core, including accredited degree programmes at all levels;
 - short courses, schools and Cliff Local serving the needs of lay people in the church;
 - evangelists acting as a catalyst for mission and evangelism in the Church;
 - an annual Festival offering a vibrant programme for all ages;
 - the Cliff Year offering young people a year of vocational exploration;
 - the conference centre providing accommodation for individuals and groups;
 - Global Partnerships supporting lay and ordained training across the globe;
 - a series of resources promoting the themes of mission and evangelism.

- 4.2 The College continues to celebrate and treasure its relationship with the Methodist Church and works in partnership with the Church in a wide variety of ways:
- supporting the Connexional Team in the delivery of *Worship: Learning & Preaching*, and enabling students to train in ways that meet their own learning needs;
 - working alongside the Evangelism and Growth team, and with members of the team embedded in the Cliff staff, to ensure a co-ordinated approach as the *God for All* strategy is implemented across the Connexion;
 - providing a meeting place for groups and committees;
 - supporting the local church through short courses that provide learning for those in ministry roles, and Cliff Local that makes this learning more local;
 - offering hospitality and opportunities for learning from those in ministry locally;
 - supporting the global Methodist Church through the enhancement of strong relationships and partnerships, the training of those in lay and ordained ministry and the development of new and appropriate ways of learning, in close collaboration with the Global Relationships Committee and staff team;
 - supporting online learning and training opportunities through TheologyX, a platform which is under development as a key connexional hub for virtual learning opportunities;
 - being a major provider of degree courses and research opportunities which benefit the whole Church, nurture future theologians and theological educators, and stimulate wider reflection and discernment.
- 4.3 The biggest challenge for the College during the COVID-19 pandemic has been the move to online teaching. When lockdown was introduced in late March 2020 all on-site course delivery was stopped and moved online virtually overnight. This required the faculty, administrators, librarian, and colleagues across the College to deliver learning in a completely different way at a crucial point of the year. The aim was to minimise the impact on students and enable them to complete their work remotely. Cliff College is uniquely positioned to meet the changing demand through technology and learning innovation.
- Its nimble structure already allows it to facilitate creative and timely short courses. With this same nimbleness, it has reimagined all its programmes to ensure Cliff is at the cutting edge of dynamic, responsive, flexible and engaging course delivery.
 - TheologyX, alongside its media studio, has given it a head start as the pandemic forces all institutions to rethink their delivery model. Through TheologyX, it is well positioned to provide high-quality online learning at all academic levels to students worldwide.
 - It is working with leading student services providers, such as TalkCampus, Global Digital Theological Library and the Church of the Nazarene's GNECsis system to ensure students engaging online receive an unrivalled e-learning experience. Through these partner providers it will provide enhanced mental health provision, access to over 600,000 theological texts, and an easy-to-use student management system – all of which will support the student in learning.
- 4.4 The staff team at Cliff College led by the Principal the Revd Ashley Cooper has developed a new identity statement document that will help it to develop a new vision document and business plan for September 2021 and the following five years. 'Vision21' is a process that the whole College is currently undertaking, to develop its work so that it is fit for purpose, meeting the needs of the Church and working within a clear and sustainable financial framework. It is also engaging with a number of its partners in this process, including colleagues in the Connexional Team and All We Can.
5. **The Queen's Foundation**
- 5.1 The Queen's Foundation has continued, on behalf of the Methodist Church, to receive all those candidates accepted by the Methodist Conference for initial ministerial training. 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 COVID-19 virus and the measures taken to contain its threat had a huge impact on its activities and, following public health advice and the guidance of partner universities and sponsoring churches, it changed all face to face learning to online learning at the end of the spring term. This meant that the three Easter schools had to be rapidly re-shaped to this new mode, retaining not only high-quality teaching but also as much formational learning as possible. At the same time, it developed plans to move all summer term learning and formation for first year students, including placements, into the autumn term and to move some autumn term teaching into the summer term. It put processes in place as additional support for those writing dissertations beyond probation studies (as well as for other Queen's students writing dissertations), to help them complete their programme. The pandemic has disrupted studies in a number of ways for people, so Queen's also invited ministers hoping to complete work to push their studies into the coming year, 2020/2021, if their situation demanded that. Once it had been confirmed that the University of Durham would waive the continuation fee for this year for those affected, a number have been enabled to continue with studies from which they might otherwise have withdrawn.

- 5.2 The whole allocations process took place on Zoom and Queen's has learned the advantage of having the conversation online between each recommended candidate and a Queen's tutor and member of the Allocations Panel, as well as any necessary conversations between the Church's Wellbeing Adviser and recommended candidates, and might seek to continue that practice.
- 5.3 The Queen's Periodic External Review was carried out under the auspices of the Quality in Formation Panel and the final report gave a verdict of unqualified 'Confidence' in the work that Queen's is doing. The Governors in early July agreed the Foundation's responses to the recommendations made in the final report. Under the Partnership Agreement with the Methodist Church, there continues to be a regular pattern of meetings between the Principal, the Director of Methodist Formation and senior members of the Ministries Team, as well as an annual meeting between the Foundation leadership and members of both the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) and Ministries Team. Methodist governors, nominated from both the Ministries Committee and the Council, are playing a full part in the governance and oversight of the Foundation's work. Professor Clive Marsh took on the role of Principal from 1 September 2020.
- 5.4 The strong growth of the Centre for Black Theology has led to the launch of a new undergraduate pathway focused on Black theology for Black Majority Church members, on the model developed originally for the (Methodist) Queen's Connexional Course. This also builds on the expertise developed through taster pathways for both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, and MA provision that foregrounds Black Theology within a (Newman University) course in Theology and Transformative Practice. The Centre for Black Theology is also supporting a number of new research students. The generosity of the Methodist Church, under the oversight of the Global Relationships Committee and staff team, has enabled Queen's to develop another of the Governors' priorities, in developing work with theological educators in the global South, in its Partnership in Theological Education Project.
6. **Wesley House Cambridge**
Work has continued through the year on establishing new frameworks for partnership between the Connexion and Wesley House, which will culminate in a new Memorandum of Understanding being drawn up with the trustees for approval at their May meeting, and by the Ministries Committee in June. This will be the first fruit of the CDiM strategy's goal of new agreements with Methodist-related institutions, and will pull together both existing shared

work, and also aspirations for future collaboration. The Director of Learning for Ministry has been grateful to attend meetings of the trustee body at Wesley House, and will seek to continue to strengthen this connection in future months.

7. HE Awards Criteria

- 7.1 The Awards Panel met via Zoom in August 2020, and was able to confirm the awards for 2020/2021. Despite a lower annual budget because of the impact of the pandemic on connexional funding, all those with valid applications which met the criteria were given awards towards tuition costs. Because of the Ministries Committee's work on revising the criteria, the Awards Panel was able to exercise some flexibility in giving slightly more to those pursuing doctoral research likely to be of broad benefit to the Church, and which is also in general more costly. The Ministries Committee resolved that the question about prior Methodist funding on the application form should be expanded to include all prior postgraduate research or higher degrees and not only that funded by the Methodist Church.
- 7.2 The Director of Learning for Ministry and the Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee have had individual conversations with all those undertaking research and higher degrees and in receipt of this funding. The purpose is to build up a better sense of what is being worked on and what opportunities might exist to offer the fruit of such research to the wider Church and its mission and to enquire how better we might resource and support their activity. This is already proving a worthwhile and revealing exercise, and in particular scholars have welcomed enthusiastically the plan to offer an online 'community of practice' to connect active Methodist researchers. This resource will be developed in 2020/2021 in partnership with Cliff College and the TheologyX platform. Two online research conferences, one for Master's level students and one for those pursuing doctoral research, have been scheduled for June. The Ministries Committee will also be asked to appoint the review panel for 2021/2022 applications at its summer meeting.

8. Continuing Development in Ministry

The new strategy for Continuing Development in Ministry (CDiM) was adopted by the Ministries Committee in February 2020. The strategy contains five main recommendations, four of these are in progress and/or complete: the implementation of 'live' profiles for ministers which include accurate and up-to-date information about ongoing learning and development; the integration of supervision with Ministerial Development Review (MDR); the amendment of SO 745 in relation to funding (approved by the 2020 Conference); and ongoing conversations with Methodist-related learning institutions, with a view to the development of new memoranda of understanding which may undergird and support CDiM provision. The Director of Learning for Ministry continues to progress these conversations, and the first gathering of a new forum for these institutions took place on 25 February 2021. One recommendation is outstanding, relating to the provision of 'new' money which ministers may claim for CDiM purposes. Because of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on finances, and thus future budget-planning, not to mention the huge disruptions it has caused in when and how ministers may undertake CDiM, the Ministries Team, with the approval of the Ministries Committee, has concluded that this recommendation cannot be an urgent current priority. The intention is to return to its implementation as soon as is practical, and certainly by the beginning of 2022.

9. Global Theological Education

The Committee received feedback on the exciting work going on with partner Churches overseas. It was pleased to hear that a clearer sense of strategy is emerging, building on the growing work with worldwide partner Churches and the work of three British institutions (Cliff College, The Queen's Foundation and Wesley House) sponsored by the Global Relationships Committee. The Director of Learning for Ministry has established helpful and collegial relationships with relevant team members in both the Irish Connexion and the United

Methodist Church (UMC), as well as within the European e-Academy and Methodist Theological Schools in Europe (MTSE) group of Methodist-affiliated institutions in Europe. It is hoped that firmer proposals for shared work, especially between the British and Irish Conferences, can be brought soon for discussion and approval.

CHANGING PATTERNS OF MINISTRY in relation to the Ministries Committee

10. The 2020 Conference (Resolution 34/12) directed the Stationing and Ministries Committees to review the candidating, training and stationing processes in order to: a. explore how it can be ensured that there is a clear process for enabling some presbyters to serve in local, pioneer and specific cultural/language appointments; b. explore how this possibility could be clearly communicated to those involved in the candidating, training and stationing matching processes; and c. prepare provisional guidance for those considering such appointments; and report to the 2021 Conference. This is an ongoing piece of work with others.

LAY MINISTRY

11. **Training Resources for those who receive an Authorisation to Preside**

The 2020 Conference adopted the following resolution from the report on Changing Patterns of Ministry:

34/4. The Conference directed the Ministries Committee in consultation with the Faith and Order Committee to make available training resources for those who receive an authorisation to preside at the Lord's Supper.

These resources are now available on the website. It should be noted that District Chairs are not obliged to follow the guidelines within those resources if they have other protocols in place.

12. **Local Lay-Pastors in the context of Changing Patterns of Ministry**

The Changing Patterns of Ministry group continues its work in this area, and will bring resolutions to establish the office of Local Lay-Pastor. The Ministries Committee discussed this work at its February meeting.

13. **Worship: Leading and Preaching**

- 13.1 One of the consequences of COVID-19 has been the rapid adoption and acceptance of online technology. Following cancellation of the Worship, Leading and Preaching (WLP) Summer School at Cliff College an online version was attended by 80 students. The success of this resulted in a plan to run similar **Explore Online** sessions twice yearly in January and July. The January event confirmed that this is meeting a real need, especially for those students whose circuits struggle to provide adequate tutorial and mentoring support. Additionally, a fortnightly programme of **WLP Online Inductions** commenced in October. All newly-enrolled students and their tutors are invited to attend a 90 minute online session introducing the course and the learning process. Take-up and attendee feedback have been most encouraging and reflected in reduced anxiety amongst new students and tutors. In reviewing the future role of local preachers and worship leaders, we need to draw on the valuable lessons learned, particularly in the light of anecdotal evidence that the experience of online worship has enabled many beyond the boundaries of church to encounter faith and join with worshipping communities. The blend of physical and online church (sometimes referred to as hybrid church) is an area where local preachers and worship leaders might contribute greatly, and they need to be equipped with the understanding and skills to minister effectively in the changing context.

- 13.2 The Committee appointed the members of the **Local Preachers' Board of Studies**. The Board of Studies instigated a comprehensive review of the portfolio assessment process, which resulted in a radical overhaul of the portfolio process for WLP. Intensive development work, with significant contributions from the Learning Network, enabled version 3.0 of the course website

to be opened in September 2020 for new enrolments. From November 2020, all eight modules in WLP 3.0 were opened to students who wish to transfer from version 2.0. There are now 267 enrolled users on WLP 3.0 and user feedback has been encouraging. More details on WLP 3.0 are available at www.methodist.org.uk/wlp3.

- 13.3 A pilot **WLP in a Year** programme was launched in September 2019. Based around WLP Spring and Summer Schools and three additional residential weekends, this supplemented the work of circuit Tutors and Mentors for students who wished to commit to intensive study for one year. Of the eleven students who started, four completed the course on schedule and are now recognised as local preachers. For the remainder, COVID-19 significantly disrupted their intentions but several are on track to complete their studies this year. After a year's pause, **WLP in a Year** will restart in September 2021 with a higher proportion of online delivery.
- 13.4 In 2021 the *Faith & Worship* course, which was the authorised training course for Local Preachers for nearly 30 years, comes to an end. *Faith & Worship* transformed lay theological education in the church, and countless local preachers and ordained ministers discovered the wonder of theology and the possibilities of preaching through studying it. We celebrate the vision and commitment shown by the creators of the course material and the tutors, mentors and connexional assessors who have accompanied and supported so many on their journey through *Faith & Worship*. We hope, circumstances permitting, to hold a service of celebration later in the year.
- 13.4. **Development of Worship Leaders and Preachers (M25/2019)** – The 2019 Conference agreed that the Ministries Committee will receive an annual report on the work of worship leaders and local preachers, and in particular their initial training and ongoing development, which will then be included in the reports of the Ministries Committee to the Council. This report was received in February.

As of January 2021, there were 5,952 active local preachers recorded on the connexional database, a decline from 6,171 the previous year.

Of those in training:

- 405 had a Note to Preach, and there were 655 persons On Trial as local preachers.
- 197 portfolios were successfully completed on the *Worship: Leading & Preaching* course in 2020, compared with 201 the previous year. Of these, 14 were from worship leaders (2019: 31), who have successfully completed modules 1-4. 89 were LP Portfolio A, (2019: 88), and 84 were LP Portfolio B, (2019: 82) indicating completion of LP training. (NB worship leaders complete one portfolio, local preachers complete two.)
- During the year, 80 new students enrolled as worship leaders, and 155 as local preachers. (Previously 104, 167). These figures are encouraging, given the disruption to public worship due to COVID-19, but work continues as part of the Vocations Strategy to encourage people to consider worship and preaching as expressions of their call to discipleship.
- On the *Faith & Worship* course, 62 portfolios were assessed in 2020 (four are submitted during the entire course). Of these 40 were for Section D, which provides an indication of those who completed their training during the year. The comparable figures for 2019 were 111 and 51, the decline being the consequence of *Faith & Worship* ending in spring 2021.
- 108 new local preachers were accredited during 2020, as indicated by the number of President's Letters requested, a slight increase from 103 in 2019.

The number of local preachers reported to have died was 236.

VOCATIONS

14. **Vocations Strategy and Vocations Sunday**

There is a clear direction for this work to move forward. The Committee notes the following:

- There is now one programme content for Exploring Ordained Ministry days, for in person events and online events, being led in part by the Ministries: Vocations and Worship (M:VW) team and in part by the Learning Network. The programme ensures consistency of content and tone. 119 people attended the M:VW led Exploring Ordained Ministry Days over the previous two years.
- A series of 13 reflective postcards is available from Methodist Publishing relating to 12 forms of vocation within church life. Each one has an image that can be used as an aid to reflection and contemplation, whilst engaging with any of the discernment questions on the reverse. Each postcard links to the website to help people explore their next vocational steps.
- A diverse range of local preachers has been filmed sharing why they 'love being a local preacher'. These will be placed on the website and will be used in the #LoveThisCalling campaign (patterns show that when there are a group of local preachers in training from one place candidating numbers increase – this trend is being further explored by the officer for Worship and Local Preachers).
- A new vocations campaign #LoveThisCalling – runs from January to May 2021. The campaign will build up to Vocations Sunday on 2 May 2021, with a follow on Living Library event for those who are exploring a calling within church life. This campaign is a partnership between the Connexional Team, 12 Baskets (and The Vine) and Singing The Faith +
- The Committee has approved the setting of Vocations Sunday in the Methodist Church as the first Sunday in May for the next 5 years up to and including May 2025.
- A new vocational reflection booklet is being devised for churches to distribute.
- Vocations is now embedded in workplans across the Connexional Team including: Communications, Children Youth & Family, Learning Network, Evangelism & Growth, Global Relations, Armed Forces Chaplaincy, and of course M:VW.
- An increasing number of districts now have intentional vocations strategies.
- We are gathering learning from 'sending' churches, circuits, and districts, with intentional vocations strategies. This runs alongside conversations with churches with a desire to increase the confidence of BAME leadership. All of this will form the basis of a new light-touch resource to enable church, circuit and district to be strategic about creating a culture to enable vocational exploration.

15. **Discernment Process for Senior Posts (Resolution 25/5 (2020))**

The 2020 Conference adopted the following resolution from the report *Reaffirming Our Calling: Oversight and Trusteeship*.

25/5. The Conference directed the Ministries Committee to bring proposals for a discernment process for senior posts, to bring interim proposals to the 2021 Conference, and to bring a full report with proposed changes to the Standing Orders to the 2022 Conference.

At the Committee's February meeting the Interim Director of the Ministries Team presented interim proposals for a discernment process. The Committee approved the suggested process and the direction of travel, and interim proposals will be brought to the 2021 Conference.

16. **Candidating numbers**

At the request of the Council the committee considered the policies relating to candidating for ordained ministry in order to identify and mitigate as far as possible those things which might prevent people discerning or responding to a call to presbyteral or diaconal ministry. The committee affirmed work in progress, revisited the report published in 2019 and its recommendations to the Ministries Committee, and will keep these matters under regular review.

MATTERS RELATING TO ORDAINED MINISTRY

17. Supervision Reference Group and draft Reflective Supervision Policy 2021-2026

The Committee scrutinised and recommends to the Methodist Council the draft Reflective Supervision Policy. The guidance of the committee has been incorporated into the policy, see **[MC/21/36]**. The Committee recommends to the Methodist Council a review of the implementation of the policy, including its extension to relevant lay roles, to be brought to the Conference of 2026.

18. The Ministry of Deacons in Proclamation and Preaching

This work follows on from the 2019 Conference report on the Theology and Ecclesiology Underpinning the Diaconate and Methodist Diaconal Order, which required further actions from the Ministries Team and other parts of the Church.

The 2019 Conference adopted the following resolution:

25/5. The Conference affirmed that preaching is part of the ministry of deacons and directed that from 1 September 2020:

- a. deacons shall no longer be listed as Local Preachers on the Plan;**
- b. the list of ministers on the Plan will follow the order listed in Standing Order 785(4)(a);**
- c. all deacons will be members of the Local Preachers' Meeting.**

The Interim Director of Ministries has written to all Superintendents to ensure this is in place throughout the Connexion. A series of FAQs have been answered by him and by the Warden of the Diaconal Order and placed on the Methodist Church Website and can be seen at <https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/local-preachers-and-worship-leaders/deacons>

The 2019 Conference adopted the following resolution:

25/11. The Conference directed the Ministries Committee to ensure that there are resources to support and equip deacons in a preaching ministry which can be made available to deacons, probationer deacons and those who began initial ministerial training before 2020 who are not, or are not training to be, Local Preachers. The Conference further directed the Warden of the Order to make such resources available as appropriate.

A working group was formed to work through the implications for those who have already trained as deacons. The Committee has:

- agreed the new pathway for those seeking to offer as a candidate for the diaconate;
- agreed that the training, learning and formation in relation to proclamation and preaching already in place for student deacons in initial formation is sufficient to reflect the changes enacted by the 2019 Conference's adoption of the Report;
- approved a suggestion for how the ministry of proclamation and preaching may be integrated into diaconal probation;
- adopted suggested provisions as a first response to Resolution 25/11, and emphasised the need for flexibility in relation both to the particular nature of diaconal ministry, and to individuals' differing needs, but also for coherence with other connexional training, which the provisions reflect.

19. Churches Ministerial Counselling Service (CMCS)

A request was made by the Wellbeing Adviser that the committee consider a proposal for the CMCS to change status to that of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The committee was

in principle content for this proposal to be put to the Council subject to further assurance that the counselling would continue to be effective in terms of quality and cost effectiveness. The Council approved the change of status at its meeting in January 2021.

20. **Further work on M23/2019 Obituaries**

The 2019 Conference, in response to the memorial from the Isle of Man District, agreed to review the formula at the end of ministers' obituaries indicating the length of time the deceased had served as a minister. The Ministries Committee recommended a revision of the phrase and the 2020 Conference agreed a new form of words (resolution 22/13) as follows.

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."

The revised wording highlighted additional complexity as there are some ministers who have served in both orders. Having consulted the editor of the obituaries and members of the Faith and Order Committee, it is proposed that where a minister has served as a deacon and then been accepted as a candidate for presbyteral ministry (or vice versa), the last line of the obituary should read:

'N died in the xth year of her/his age and having previously served y years in diaconal ministry, in the zth year of her/his presbyteral ministry'

Or

'N died in the xth year of her/his age and having previously served y years in presbyteral ministry, in the zth year of her/his diaconal ministry'

21. **Ministerial Development Review (MDR)**

The Committee has considered proposals for the future of MDR with particular emphasis on the relationship of MDR with supervision. A small working party was formed and in February 2021, the committee received a report recommending that a more focused approach and revised guide to MDR, supported by training materials, be prepared and implemented in September 2022.

The working group recommend that any appropriately adapted approach to MDR should:

- complement the Supervision experience offering a space where oversight and accountability can be considered openly,
- include a robust element of 360-degree feedback drawn from the experience of local church members, peers and the Minister in Oversight,
- pay attention to the requirements of the Ministerial Covenant and the Competencies for Ordained Ministry,
- focus on a particular aspect of ministry within the local context,
- encourage consideration of elements of ministry that may not naturally arise in other ways, and
- offer a clear and deliberate opportunity for the "lay voice" to be heard distinctly.

The Committee directed the Ministries Team to complete the work around MDR in accordance with the principles and direction of travel outlined.

22. **Ordained Probationers**

Occasionally when ministers apply to transfer to Full Connexion with the Methodist Church in Britain (MCB) from another Church or Conference, a recommendation is made that they should spend a period on probation. The Ministries Committee proposes amendment to Standing Order 730, as detailed in appendix A, to enable oversight of their probation to rest with the Ministerial Candidates and Probationer Oversight Committee. This will address the current

challenge for districts, who sometimes struggle to bring ordained probationers into the same processes as probationers who are in their first appointment. If the Council approves this recommendation, work will begin towards the amendment of the Standing Order to be brought to the Conference as soon as possible. The Ministries Committee recommends to the Council the changes to Standing Order 730 outlined in the attached report of the Ministerial Co-ordinator for Oversight of Ordained Ministries.

23. Ministers of Other Conferences and Churches (MOCCs)

The 14 ministers of other conferences and churches who began their ministry in MCB in this most challenging of years were all able to arrive by the end of October 2020. The group of MOCCs have formed a close-knit and supportive cohort through social media and a weekly online gathering. Induction processes are all continuing online. It is hoped that the forthcoming elements of the induction year will be able to be held in person. At the three month visit, it has been clear that all of the MOCC ministers have settled in well and are enjoying developing their ministry in the new context despite all the restrictions due to COVID-19. Their superintendents and circuit stewards have universally expressed gratitude for their collegiality and the fresh approaches they are bringing. The induction year events are now overseen by the Learning Network. COVID-19 has created a huge challenge for immigration. The closure of many visa offices around the world created backlogs in processing all applications. That caused delay in arrival for the new MOCCs and additional difficulties for some of their family members to travel with them.

24. Immigration Costs

The Ministries Committee in February 2020 affirmed the current position that: For Recognised and Regarded (R&R) ministers the cost of their first visa (3 years) and the extension (a further 3 years) is met from the connexional budget and further agreed that for ministers in Full Connexion, the cost of Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) is met from the connexional budget but the cost for naturalisation is not. However it has since become clear that the immigration rules have changed so that Indefinite Leave to Remain is no longer a one off cost but needs renewing every 10 years for adults and every 5 years for children. Naturalisation is a one off cost. It therefore could be more cost efficient to pay for naturalisation because otherwise the Church could be faced with repeated payments for ILR to enable a minister to continue ministering in the UK. In order to manage the situation in the light of changing immigration rules, which could easily change again in forthcoming months, it is proposed that the Connexional Team be responsible for ensuring that each minister can work here legally and that it should do that in the most cost-effective way. It is suggested that the immigration team in HR be given the authority to assess this on a case by case basis. This may include naturalisation or may not. This would also cover the situation for ministers who renew their R&R status beyond their first appointment but who do not apply to be received into Full Connexion.

25. Transferring Candidates and Probationers

The Committee discussed the challenges and benefits of receiving accepted candidates and probationers by transfer from other Churches following a meeting of the Ministries Team, the Queen's Foundation and the Global Relationships Team to explore all the issues. It was clear there is little parity between the way we send ministers abroad and how we receive ministers from abroad. The costs, complications, morality and a lack of equivalence with the possibilities open to British Methodist ministers wishing to serve abroad, were weighed against the experience (for the minister and the MCB) and response to a clear calling some candidates and probationers discern to serve the MCB. After discussion in both its September and February meetings, the Committee recommends to the Council that the Methodist Church in Britain no longer accepts candidates and probationers by transfer from other churches and that consequential amendments to section 73 of CPD are brought to the Conference in 2021.

26. Review of CPD section 73

1. The Ministries Committee in February 2020 requested that the Methodist Council set up a review group to carry out this work. The Council in March 2020 directed that a small group be appointed and in January 2021 the Council was informed that a scoping exercise had begun, overseen by the Assistant Secretary of the Conference and the Ministerial Coordinator for the Oversight of Ordained Ministries, consulting with others as appropriate.
2. This scoping work has involved a consideration of the whole of Section 73 taking account of the recommendations made by the Ministries Committee regarding the transfer of accepted candidates and probationers.
3. It is now clear that this major review of Section 73 will not be ready for report to the Conference in 2021. The Council is asked to defer the reporting on this piece of work to the Conference of 2022 and to appoint the review group.

STUDENT MATTERS

27. Mental Health

The 2020 Conference adopted the following resolution from the 3Generate 2019 report.

12/4. The Conference directed the Ministries Committee, in conversation with the Queen's Foundation, to explore how mental health awareness is included in presbyteral and diaconal training and to report to the 2021 Conference via the Methodist Council.

Representatives of children and young people in the Methodist Church have been consistent over a number of years in raising the profile of mental health and well-being, for children, young people and others throughout the Church and society. This has been of great help to the whole Church. The Queen's Foundation welcomed this concern and the request to explore how these issues are raised and included in presbyteral and diaconal training. The Director of Methodist Formation brought a paper to the February meeting describing what is already in place and indicating plans for developing provision.

28. Candidating, Training and Stationing processes

The 2020 Conference adopted the following resolution from the Changing Patterns of Ministry report.

34/12. The Conference directed the Stationing and Ministries Committees to review the candidating, training and stationing processes in order to:

- a. explore how it can be ensured that there is a clear process for enabling some presbyters to serve in local, pioneer and specific cultural/language appointments;
- b. explore how this possibility could be clearly communicated to those involved in the candidating, training and stationing matching processes; and
- c. prepare provisional guidance for those considering such appointments; and report to the 2021 Conference.

A Candidating Review Group has been set up, substantial work has been identified and begun and a scoping document has been approved by the Committee.

29. Cultural and Language Specific Ministry Particularly with Regard to Candidating and Ministerial Training (Memorials M19 and M20 to the 2019 Conference)

The 2019 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 speaking and other ethnically based congregations. This is a substantive piece of work for the Committee and it is necessary to address policy issues as limited deployability is currently defined geographically rather than in other ways (eg in terms of language). Conversations continue, taking account of the deliberations of the 2020 Conference on Changing Patterns in Ministry.

The Committee directed that this work be taken forward in conjunction with the Queen's Foundation and the Fellowship Groups sub-committee, taking account of the work of the Changing Patterns of Ministry group. It is recommended that:

- All ministers continue to be regarded as representative people who are connexionally stationed.
- Some ministers have particular gifts and skills which they may wish to use in ministry either exclusively or in part of their appointment. There is no expectation that they will want to do this even if they have particular skills, nor is there an expectation that they will only minister in contexts where these skills can be used. It is hoped that wherever possible, ministers bridge between different cultures particularly if they have specific language gifts.
- There is a clear and growing need for particular gifts of ministry in language or cultural-specific congregations and in fellowship groups. This need is made more acute by the ending of Mission in Britain grants which previously funded ministry in Fellowship groups and would have funded translation work for local preacher's and other training materials. An urgent response is needed to these specific needs. Live profiles are one possibility but along with them needs to come a different process of stationing matching. Perhaps all ministers can be considered for any appointment even if they are not 'in' stationing in that year. The urgency of this need needs to be addressed by stationing and not waiting for communities to produce sufficient numbers of candidates.
- The church continues to discern a call to ministry primarily before considering the context where that call might be lived out. We need to separate the two things.
- Training of student ministers:
 - a) Needs to continue to be equivalent for all and in line with the competencies for ministry.
 - b) There needs to be space for people to be formed – and this may mean that they change in the process and may not then wish to 'return' to a context which they and others might have previously identified.
 - c) Needs to be discerning about the appropriate point for people to be equipped for specific ministries i.e. during training or in later years of ministry.
- CBLP continues to be a process to broaden experience in contexts outside the student's own experience to that point. However, the committee recommends some flexibility so that CBLP could operate in a familiar language context but not the church from which the student came. CBLP should continue as at present only to be a possibility after the first year of training so that tutors can really assess the thinking and formation of the student before a suitable circuit is identified. In all CBLP settings, the circuit and Queen's work in partnership.
- Limited deployability needs to be reviewed in line with Changing Patterns of Ministry. The terminology makes it sound like a 'lesser' form of ministry and that is unhelpful. It would be helpful for specific contexts to be explored and for criteria to be developed, thus assisting the assessment process currently undertaken by the Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee (MCPOC).

DISTRICT PROBATIONERS COMMITTEE

30. The committee was consulted about a recommendation from MCPOC that Districts be permitted to work together and form one Probationers Committee to serve more than one District. The committee agreed with the recommendation which will necessitate amendment of Standing Orders 484, 725(4), 725 (5) and 728(1). It is hoped that amendments to the Standing Orders will be presented to the 2021 Conference for approval.

OTHER MATTERS

31. Fellowship Groups

The sub-committee has gathered quarterly via Zoom. A member of the Evangelism and Growth (E&G) team joined one of the meetings in which the *God For All* strategy was reflected upon in relation to the Fellowship Groups' model of evangelism. It was clear that the two models differ and this has implications for financial support for the work of the Fellowship Groups which represent a growing part of the Church. The sub-committee is considering possible financial strategies for the support of the Fellowship Groups where connexional grants are no longer available. The next meetings will engage with Safeguarding, Local Preachers, Vocations, Mediation and Reconciliation services.

A new Fellowship (Swahili Speaking) has joined the Sub-committee. Contact has been made with the Filipino Fellowship Group. The Fellowship groups have provided translations of the A Methodist Way of Life Card into several different languages: simplified and traditional Chinese, Igbo, Yoruba, Twi, Portuguese, Tongan, Farsi, Ndebele, Shona, Tamil and Sinhala. These are to be found on the website of the Methodist Church in Britain.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/life-and-faith/a-methodist-way-of-life/a-methodist-way-of-life-commitment-cards>

The UK has opened a British National Overseas visa scheme for British Overseas citizens and their close family members from 31 January 2021. They will be able to apply to enter or stay in the UK for a period of 30 months (which can be extended by a further 30 months) or a period of 5 years. There is an expectation that people from Hong Kong will apply in numbers. A programme has been developed to welcome and support some of those who might come to the UK on this visa. This has been supported by two Districts in the North East Region and funding for this work is being explored.

The Ministries Committee appointed the members of the Fellowship Groups Sub-Committee.

32. The Memorials Committee

The Committee nominated Mr Peter Baffoe as the Ministries Committee representative to the Memorials Committee.

***RESOLUTIONS

35/1. The Council receives the report.

35/2. The Council recommends to the Conference the proposed alternate wordings of the phrase which appears at the end of obituaries, where a minister has served in both orders.

paragraph 19

35/3. The Council approves the policy as set out in the report (paragraph 21), and accordingly requests the Law and Polity Committee to prepare amendments to SO 730, for presentation to the Conference.

paragraph 22

35/4. The Council directs that the HR immigration team is given authority to:

- i) ensure that all ministers accepted from other Conferences and Churches to work in the Methodist Church in Britain are legally enabled to do so;**
- ii) make arrangements for this in the most cost effective way.**

paragraph 24

35/5. The Council approves the policy that the Methodist Church in Britain no longer accepts candidates and probationers by transfer from other churches and accordingly requests the

Law and Polity Committee to prepare the necessary amendments to Standing Orders for presentation to the 2021 Conference. *paragraph 25*

35/6. The Council notes that the review of Section 73 of Standing Orders will now be brought to the 2022 Conference. *paragraph 26*

35/7. The Council appoints a review group to undertake the review of Section 73 of Standing Orders (names to be tabled). *paragraph 26*

35/8. The Council approves the policy that Districts be permitted to work together and form one Probationers Committee to serve more than one District, and accordingly requests the Law and Polity to prepare the necessary amendments to Standing Orders, for presentation to the Conference. *paragraph 30*

Appendix A

Paper MC 2021-1-F - Ordained Probationers – Changes needed to Standing Orders as a result of Ministries Committee decisions of September 2020

Contact Name and Details	The Revd Dr Claire R Potter, Ministerial Coordinator for Oversight of Ordained Ministries potterc@methodistchurch.org.uk
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Recommendations to the Ministries Committee by MCPOC:	Implications on Standing Orders
<p>1. Candidates' Selection Committee (CSC) acting as a transfer panel make recommendations regarding probation for some transferring ministers before they are received into Full Connexion. If these recommendations are agreed by the Conference, these ministers then become the responsibility of the Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee (MCPOC) for oversight.</p>	<p>SO 730(9) (i-iv) covers the decision of CSC SO 725 outlines the oversight MCPOC exercises for presbyteral and diaconal students and probationers but this does not refer to those who have transferred and are carrying out a period of probation prior to being received into Full Connexion.</p> <p>It is proposed that an additional clause is inserted to become SO 730(15) – Ordained Probationers. SO 730(15)(i) defines these ministers as 'ordained probationers' SO 730(15)(ii) states that their development is under the oversight of MCPOC.</p>
<p>2. All ordained probationers should be asked to complete 2 years on probation so that there is adequate time for the church to see their progress. Only in exceptional cases will it be a shorter period than 2 years (and MCPOC would decide this). In some cases there may be a need for it to be extended beyond 2 years, if it is judged that they are not yet meeting the competencies expected for those being Received into Full Connexion.</p>	<p>SO 721(1) and (2) state the requirements regarding the length of probation for those who have been trained for ministry in MCB. However this standing order does not refer to ordained probationers.</p> <p>It is proposed that SO 730(15)(iv) sets out the length of probation for ordained probationers which states that they normally undertake two years' probation but MCPOC can agree a shorter or longer period in exceptional circumstances.</p>
<p>3. All should complete the Orientation project and the Gospel in Context project, assessed through the Queen's Foundation. Catrin Harland-Davies has been consulted about this and stated that it would be acceptable to Queen's in principle while also noting that this could be difficult for recently arrived ministers where English is not their first language. There may also be some awkwardness for experienced ministers to be doing these projects alongside those who are just beginning ministry. However, if these proposals are accepted, this would be the only part of probation where the two groups</p>	<p>Since there is no current reference to the content of the probation period for ordained probationers, and since there are usually specific areas of development recommended for each ordained probationer which are individual to them, it is difficult to be too prescriptive.</p> <p>It is therefore proposed that SO 730(15)(v) states that the content of their training will be identified by MCPOC and this may involve some orientation studies at the Queen's Foundation.</p>

would interact, which is an improvement on the current situation.	
4. District Probationers' Committees should not be involved in assessing, overseeing or supporting these ministers at all. The ministers will not be required to attend meetings of District Probationers Committees.	If the references to ordained probationers are kept within SO 730 rather than SO 725, there will be no confusion regarding this. The District Probationers' committee should not be referred to in SO 730.
5. Oversight and assessment will be provided directly by MCPOC.	See 1 above
6. Support and induction will be provided by the MOCC induction processes and their circuits and districts (through their supervisor and their Minister in Oversight).	There is currently no reference in standing orders to induction or support of MOCCs so this remains as understood practice rather than a constitutional matter.
7. MCPOC will receive 3 reports each year on each ordained presbyteral probationer and 4 on each ordained diaconal probationer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. From the Queen's Foundation on their Orientation/Gospel in Context projects b. From their Superintendent – assessed according to the competencies c. From their Chair of District – assessed according to the competencies d. For diaconal probationers : From the Warden of the MDO – assessed according to the competencies and including how they inhabit the religious order and order of ministry. 	It is proposed that SO 730(15)(iii) sets out the requirement for these four reports to be received annually.
8. MCPOC will decide in April each year whether the minister should proceed to the second year of their probation (1 st year) and whether the minister is ready to be received into Full Connexion (2 nd year).	It is proposed that SO 730(15)(vi) states that MCPOC makes recommendations regarding the progress of ordained probationers to the Conference annually.
9. The implications of these recommendations on standing orders will need to be considered with the Law and Polity Committee.	
10. Communication of these recommendations will need to be made to Chairs of District and to CSC panels.	
11. We recommend retaining the term 'ordained probationers' because it accurately describes the situation.	
12. We recommend that these proposed changes are brought to the Conference of 2021 through the Ministries Committee Report.	