

Oversight and Trusteeship: Update

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Following the discussions at the Council at its January meeting, this report brings a brief update on those aspects of this work which falls under the responsibility of the Council.

The resolutions of the 2020 Conference give two specific responsibilities to the Council. One is under 25/7 and relates to the work being done in regions as Districts review their lives in response to 25/6 and 25/6A (the full list of the resolutions can be found in the Appendix below). The Council appointed the task group in October and a report to the March Council will follow the latest meeting of the group on 4 March.

The other responsibility given to the Council is under 25/1 and relates to the minimum size of local churches. The Council heard in January that the Law and Polity Committee has given considerable thought to this question (see paragraphs 2 to 23 of MC/21/7C). The Council, when it considered this in January, did not come to a firm view as to the precise number. In the light of the conversations in the focus group in January and the feedback received in the plenary session, and, following consultation with the Law and Polity Committee, the Council is asked to recommend that the minimum size of a local church be raised to twelve members (SO 605(2)). This will sit alongside the work that is being done in relation to the creative examples of the ways in which one church with multiple sites which will be offered to enable local churches and circuits to flourish as missional communities.

Work in relation to the other resolutions continues and will be reported to the Conference as directed.

***RESOLUTIONS

37/1. The Council receives the report.

37/2. The Council recommends to the Conference that the minimum size of a local church as stipulated in SO 605(2) be raised to twelve members.e

APPENDIX

Oversight and Trusteeship resolutions from the 2020 Conference

25/0. The Conference receives the Report and invites comments on it from around the Connexion.

25/1. The Conference welcomes and affirms the ethos and direction of the Report's section on local church trusteeship, and supports the suggestion that raising the minimum size for a Local Church will assist Circuits to coordinate their mission. The Conference, therefore, directs the Methodist Council, in consultation with the Law and Polity Committee, to ensure that a review of Standing Order 605 (1) and (2) takes place and that a proposal is brought to the 2021 Conference to raise the minimum size for a Local Church, together with examples of creative ways in which one Church on multiple sites and/or federations of classes under a united Church Council can enable local missional communities to flourish. In the light of this, and to maximise the potential fruitfulness of all Circuits' use of their resources, the Conference further directs all Circuit Meetings to review the number of Church Councils in the Circuit and encourages Church Councils to work together to determine the best way of working to achieve the minimum number of trustee bodies necessary to fulfil its calling.

- 25/1a. The Conference directs Circuit Meetings and Church Councils to undertake Unconscious Bias related training in order to ensure equality and diversity within the appointments process of the new trustee bodies.
- 25/2. The Conference refers to the Law and Polity Committee Section 4 of the report and directs the Committee to report to the 2021 Conference on the legal and constitutional issues that the proposal to create a smaller trustee body raises.
- 25/3. The Conference directs the Secretary of the Conference to convene a review of the size of the Conference as required under SO 100(2) and to report with recommendations for any changes to the 2021 Conference.
- 25/4. The Conference directs the Strategy and Resources Committee in consultation with the Faith and Order Committee to review the constitution, function and inter-relationship of all connexional committees, to bring interim proposals to the 2021 Conference, and to bring a full report with proposed changes to the Standing Orders to the 2022 Conference.
- 25/5. The Conference directs the Ministries Committee to bring proposals for a discernment process for senior posts, to bring interim proposals to the 2021 Conference, and to bring a full report with proposed changes to the Standing Orders to the 2022 Conference.
- 25/6. The Conference directs the Secretary of the Conference to ensure that each District reviews its mission plan, committee structure and ways of working and considers its findings alongside other Districts in a regional grouping.
- 25/6a. The Conference directs that within the process of reviewing mission plans, committee structures and ways of working at District Level, equality and diversity will be taken into consideration, and that any persons responsible for appointing new members to those committees will undertake Unconscious Bias related training.
- 25/7. The Conference directs the Council to appoint a task group to receive reports from regional groups and to report to the 2021 Conference with proposals for change from 2022 onwards.
- 25/8. The Conference directs the Faith and Order Committee to consider the report and to report to the 2021 Conference on the faith and order issues that the proposals raise.
- 25/9. The Conference directs the Secretary of the Conference to convene a small group to have oversight of the work on structures of oversight and trusteeship to ensure that there is collaborative working, further consultation as necessary and that concerns already identified and comments received after the Conference are addressed, and in order to ensure that the proposals brought to the 2021 Conference are cohesive and comprehensive.