

Methodist Council Objectives

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1. Over the course of the last connexional year, the Council worked on various iterations of a set of objectives for its work 2018-2020. During the year the work was also informed by the ongoing reflections of the Connexional Leaders' Forum. Following the meeting in April 2018 the Council asked a small group to finalise this work at the same time as working on a discussion paper for the Conference. That group finalised the discussion paper for the Conference and the objectives contained within this paper.
2. In tandem with this the SRC in September reviewed the full list of work generated from the Conference. Over the last few years this list of work was taken as being the 'workplan' for the Team. This year it was noted that this 'workplan' only contained those things directed by the Conference in any given year and not the full scope of the work asked of the Team by the Council. That work is contained partly in the Council objectives paper.
3. The SRC also noted that the list of the work from the Conference could not, in essence be debated or changed; it was the work directed by the Conference. What the Council and the SRC are charged with is ensuring that the work is taken forward with the right amount of resources being allocated to the work. The oversight of that work belongs to the Council, but the management of the work sits with the Senior Management Team of the Connexional Team and the SRC.
4. The SRC therefore decided not to supply the full list to the Council, but instead directed that a 'programme of work' be supplied to the Council which would show the overview of what work was required. The SRC would continue to engage with fuller project plans on key areas. The cluster descriptions provide the full picture of work being undertaken by the Team.
5. In the light of the decisions taken since the Conference (which form the backbone of the programme of work), and a wide ranging conversation at the Connexional Leaders' Forum in September 2018, the Council objectives have been updated, with additions being marked in italics. Further reflection has also been undertaken on both the language and timelines for all the work set out in this paper. It is worth noting how little needed to be added to capture the work directed by the Conference which is hopefully an indication of the shared vision for the reaffirmation of *Our Calling*.

***RESOLUTIONS

72/1. The Council adopts the tasks, aims and priorities as set out in the report.

Our Calling: Methodist Council Objectives

Worship—increase the awareness of God’s presence and celebrate God’s love

1. Proclaiming the Gospel through worship

The Council’s task: to consider how best to enable every act of worship conducted in the name of the Methodist Church to give honour to God through excellence, creativity, prayerful contemplation and encompassing a variety of spiritualities.

Therefore the Council will aim:

- a) To support and enable local preachers and ministers to lead high quality, engaging, authentic, contextual worship around the Connexion.
- b) To ensure the support and training is offered to resource local arrangements appropriately.

With the following as immediate priorities:

- c) To continue to refine the *Worship: Leading and Preaching* course – including addressing issues around online mode of delivery and appropriateness for Worship Leaders.
- d) To reflect on the nature and frequency of accreditation of those in authorised ministries and modelling ongoing feedback and review of those leading worship.
- e) To determine what support and ongoing training may be needed for the large number of supernumeraries leading worship.
- f) To have agreed a mandatory Continuing Development package for Local Preachers.
- g) *To support development in ministerial training pilots.*

2. The ministry of the whole people of God in the life of the world

The Council’s task: to have a clear articulation of the Church’s engagement with God’s mission and therefore to ensure there are ministers, local preachers and lay leaders of the required gifts and qualities for that mission and that they are effectively deployed. Enabling all people to discern and utilise their gifts in responding to *Our Calling*.

Therefore the Council will aim:

- a) To have embedded an ethos of whole life, life long and life changing discipleship across the Connexion where a mutual respect of the vocations of lay and ordained flourish.
- b) To achieve an increase in vocations to ordained ministry, compared to 2016 through the opening up of exploration and training opportunities.
- c) To have in place processes to identify and train ministers who are missional, adaptable and collaborative, and able to lead the Church in the 2020s, 2030s and beyond.
- d) To have built on initial developments to offer a broad support package for lay workers and ensure they are deployed effectively in Circuits as well as nurture people into lay ministry roles.
- e) To implement a more effective and strategic connexional approach for the deployment of ordained ministers including the creating and ending of appointments.
- f) To have inculcated a commitment to accountable discipleship for all Methodist people as a Methodist Way of Life.
- g) To ensure young people are part of strategies to participate in the development of vocations for the age we live in.

With the following as immediate priorities:

- h) To implement a strategy for an increased response to vocational discernment, including the diversity of those engaging in our processes.
- i) To grow the number of opportunities for vocational exploration.

- j) To re-invigorate the understanding of the possibilities of offering for presbyteral ministry in a local appointment
- k) To complete a review of the selection of ministers, and to establish a working group to look at non-stipendiary ministry that need not be itinerant but is nevertheless connexional.
- l) To undertake work on the principles of how appointments are agreed and funded and to implement robust systems to scrutinize and approve appointment profiles.
- m) To develop methods of identification and selection relating to the superintendents of the future.
- n) To establish the mandatory training of superintendents to ensure they are equipped for leadership at circuit level.
- o) To continue to resource the accountable supervision of those in ministry appropriately.
- p) To continue to resource a high quality, locally-based, authorised lay led ministry.
- q) To address the need to be able to identify diverse future senior leaders (for the Church's future) and then journey with them to enable them to flourish.
- r) *To engage with the Faith and Order Committee's work with the Church of England relating to interchangeability and the place of the diaconate.*

Learning and Caring – help people to grow and learn as Christians, through mutual support and care

3. Resources for the Church: the use of God's good gifts

The Council's task: to use the resources of the Church to support Districts, Circuits and churches to be most effective in their mission, by providing cost-effective connexional specialist services and relevant local based resources

Therefore the Council will aim:

- a) To support the embedding of *Our Calling* in every aspect of the life of the Church enabling us all to make focused decisions.
- b) To have an effective suite of shared services for Districts, building on established services and having introduced new ones in response to demand (to include Property, Finance and other areas).
- c) To have in place a financial strategy which
 - i. is working towards a significant reduction in the assessment for local churches as income is drawn from other sources
 - ii. Enables a greater sharing of resources
- d) *To consider how Districts can more effectively be resourced and the connexional principle of support articulated, and where managing trusteeship of Local Churches and Circuits should most effectively reside*

With the following as immediate priorities:

- e) To decide how to make finance available in Districts for the support of Mission and *Our Calling*.
- f) To implement the property strategy and the finance strategy approved by the Council.
- g) To have agreed the terms of reference for a review of the CPF levy that will explore the possibilities of granting an exemption in order to support missional work where there is no requirement/need for a new building.
- h) To ensure delivery from the reshaped Connexional Team for the best support *Our Calling*.
- i) *To oversee the Methodist Church House re-development project ensuring the process is shaped for the new building to be utilised to support the aims of the Methodist Church.*

4. Oversight and Leadership

The Council's task: to operate the oversight/leadership functions of the Methodist Church as effectively as possible in pursuit of the Church's mission ensuring the most appropriate use of resources.

Therefore the Council will aim:

- a) To have refined patterns of oversight/leadership and governance so as to provide high-quality, priority-driven policy-making to deliver *Our Calling* as the discerned manifestation of the Church's mission.
- b) To ensure that MDR and supervision processes are embedded in the life of the Church for all in the active ministry.

With the following as immediate priorities:

- c) To ensure the ways of working of the Council, the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC), the Chairs' Meeting and the Connexional Leaders' Forum (CLF) are fit to deliver a) above.

Service– be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice

5. A Church for all people

The Council's task: to be an inclusive and diverse Church by extending our reach and engagement with those who feel marginalized, ensuring that all feel protected to be able to participate.

Therefore the Council will aim:

- a) For every District/Circuit to have a contextual strategy (which is both intentional and inclusive) for engagement which enables it to experience God's grace and people share experiences with the whole Connexion.
- b) To be a Church which is present and lovingly serving the areas in most need.
- c) To ensure all people are safe in the Church and the communities we seek to serve.

With the following as immediate priorities:

- d) To develop a strategy for evangelism and discipleship for those less well served by reason of race or class – including taking forward the work of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee in relation to 'The Unfinished Agenda'.
- e) To continue to support the growth of the language, cultural and national Fellowship Groups.
- f) To continue with the growth of 3Generate as a significant engagement in the discipleship journey of children and young people, paying particular attention to those places where young people are most excluded. *This will include encouragement of the Year of Testimony initiative.*
- g) *To encourage churches, Circuits and Districts to engage with the Marriage and Relationships consultation process*

6. Social Holiness

The Council's task: to resource work and programmes which then transform our society and communities to embody the Kingdom of God through living out our social holiness; offering loving acts of justice and service to all and challenging injustice wherever we see it.

Therefore the Council will aim:

- a) To have resources ways for Circuits and Districts to be a significant voice and proactive participant in communities throughout the Connexion; working with others to bring transformation for the sake of the Gospel. This includes our ongoing work to challenge injustice

by engaging on public issues for the sake of the whole community.

With the following as immediate priorities:

- b) To continue to develop partnerships which look to a wide range of individuals and groups (including ecumenical partners) whom we can be in mission with together (*including Mission and Ministry in Covenant*).
- c) To commit to a key number of issues where we want to act as a prophetic voice.
- d) To resource the work of the Methodist Academies and Schools Trust (MAST) in ensuring our maintained schools continue to offer high quality Methodist focused education to children and young people in the communities they live.
- e) For the Committees of the Council and the Connexional Team to strengthen their engagement with MHA, Action for Children and All We Can; remembering their heritage but also our shared hope in a brave new world.
- f) To ensure our Grants processes (particularly Mission in Britain Grants and Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice Grants) enable work in the hardest to reach places.

Evangelism: Making more followers of Jesus Christ

7. Evangelism

The Council's task: to equip and give confidence to the Methodist people to share the Gospel of Christ with those in our local communities so as to lead people to making a personal commitment to Christ.

Therefore the Council will aim:

- a) To have made decisions which have contributed towards the priority of having halted the fall in numbers of Methodist worshippers in our Districts (reducing the rate of decline in membership).
- b) To have develop the mechanisms to further embed 'Fresh Expressions' as important components in contextual missional engagement.
- c) To have concentrated resources where we are, or can be strong, accepting this means we will not be present in all places.

With the following as immediate priorities:

- d) To have provided the resources and momentum for Districts to establish credible strategies for growth and increased evangelism
- e) Each church, Circuit and District to have in place a 'Mission Plan' to underpin the future direction of work, including deployment of personnel and use of reserves.
- f) To evaluate gaps in our apologetic resources to ensure the Church has access to the best resources possible.

8. One Mission

The Council's task: To be celebrating and playing a full part in the global community of Methodists (eg the World Methodist Council and the European Methodist Council) for the sake of the transformation of the world through the sharing of the gospel, and being a confident Church acting prophetically in our own Connexion with ecumenical and other partners.

A world transformed by God's love;
a confident Church motivated to share God's love;
a people celebrating being part of a worldwide family.

[Vision Statement for Mission, adopted by the 2012 Conference DR 3/16]

Therefore the Council will aim:

- a) To ensure that the Mission in Britain Fund and the World Mission Fund are both serving the needs of local communities and global partners.
- b) To be more aware in all the work of the Council of the variety of languages and cultures that make up our own Church.
- c) To have worked with partners such as All We Can to build capacity in partner churches around the world.

With the following as immediate priorities:

- d) To ensure the One Mission Forum as a place of sharing and encouragement for all the Districts.
- e) To continue to realise and grow the Strategy for Global Relationships.
- f) Continued work to ensure the 'Fellowship Groups' are understood as a modern day expressions of societies of the Methodist Church and support them accordingly.
- g) To identify the links which will be nurtured and led by each District around the world with particular focus on Europe.