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Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	For approval
Resolution	85/1. The Council receives the report

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To update on progress to date with Heritage 2.0, the Methodist Heritage Committee's current Development Strategy, now in its fourth year
Main Points	Activities and achievements in delivering year 4 of the 2014-2019 Development Strategy, Heritage 2.0.
Background Context	MC/14/40, MC/15/105, MC/16/98 and MC/17/106 Methodist Heritage Committee Annual reports to the Methodist Council from 2014 to 2017.

Methodist Heritage Committee Annual Report

Achievements of the fourth year of 'Heritage 2.0' the Committee's 5-year Development Strategy 2014–2019

1. Overview

2018 has seen the Methodist Heritage Committee (MHC) marking ten years since its inception. This has also been the year when a new Chair of the Committee and a new Liaison Officer for Methodist Archives were appointed. The Committee has started to consider what it wishes to be its strategic direction for the next five years (2019-2024), which includes the next Heritage Conference to be held at Cliff College in July 2019, with a focus on Susanna Wesley and her influence on present day Methodism (2019 being the 350th anniversary of the year of her birth).

During 2018 the work of the Heritage Committee focused on the relocation of artefacts previously housed at Wesley College Bristol. There has also been a trial, working with a small number of heritage sites to see if their aims and ambitions fit with the criteria set out in the Methodist Heritage Committee's proposal to the Methodist Council (MC/17/106). The Committee's work is carried out under the following strategic outcomes:

Improved conservation
Transforming discipleship
Living a generous life

1.1. Committee membership changes

- 1.1.1. In April 2018, the Council appointed the Rt Hon the Lord Beith as the new Chair of the Methodist Heritage Committee, as successor to Sarah Friswell who had served six years in the role. Jon Purcell took on the role of Liaison Officer for Methodist Archives at the beginning of 2018 on the retirement of Philip Thornborow, who had held the role for six years. David Hart remains Chair of the Archives and Records Advisory Group (ARAG, a working group of the Heritage Committee) though has completed his six year tenure on the Methodist Heritage Committee.
- 1.1.2. There are two vacancies on the Committee. There remains a vacancy for an Archives Network Co-ordinator (this role has a place on ARAG, though not on the MHC).

2. Fourth year achievements

2.1. Heritage Places

- 2.1.1. It has been a busy year at **the New Room, Bristol**, since the launch of its new facilities. Record numbers of visitors have been welcomed, with the museum, café, library and meeting rooms holding a full programme of events, necessitating the recruitment of more volunteers to ensure the smooth running of these activities. It was decided to streamline the management governance structure with the trustees deciding to cease to appoint a Warden, with much of that role now being carried out by the Manager (now called the Director of the Museum/Charles Wesley's House).
- 2.1.2. Trustees and Directors at **Epworth Old Rectory** have been fine-tuning their Forward Plan, which sets out a vision for the development of the work at Epworth over the next five years.
- 2.1.3. Heritage visitor numbers continue to increase at **Wesley's Chapel, John Wesley's House and the Museum of Methodism**, including an increased number of visiting groups. The role of Learning and Community Engagement Officer was originally a fixed term post. This has been made a permanent full-time position, with responsibilities widened to include web administration, design and social media.

2.1.4. New initiatives are underway at **Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum of Primitive Methodism** alongside its regular programme of school visits, study days and special services, all of which have seen increased numbers. ‘Outside the Box’ is an exciting project to provide adequate and appropriate open storage facilities for over 5000 artefacts, which will enhance and visitor experience and increase the mission profile.

2.1.5. Elsewhere, heritage also continues to play an increasingly vital role in the mission of the local church. **Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford**, has employed Alison Butler as its ‘Heritage and Mission Development Officer’ to help work with the minister and a team of volunteers to develop their heritage offer to the many thousands of visitors to Oxford.

2.2. Collections

2.2.1. The **Wesley College Bristol Artefacts Working Group** has facilitated the move of the various artefacts formally held at Wesley College Bristol to their new locations as previously approved by the Council (MC/17/106 paragraph 2.2.1). A follow-up report will be presented as soon as practicable to the Methodist Council to deal with the remaining items.

2.2.2. The **Early Methodist Volume**, a collection of eighteenth-century testimonies sent as letters to the Wesleys, is now ready to be uploaded to the “Rapture and Reason” website.

2.2.3. The **Archives and Records Advisory Group** (ARAG) has delegated authority from the Heritage Committee to carry out work where the full Committee does not possess either the appropriate or sufficient experience to take technical decisions on matters relating to archives and records (such as digitisation, conservation, accession and de-accessioning). Although terms of reference for ARAG were implied in the Heritage report to the Conference in 2008, the March 2018 meeting of the Heritage Committee approved the following terms of reference:

- To encourage the use of the collections in support of the priorities and calling of the Methodist Church.
- To provide due diligence and scrutiny on behalf of the Methodist Church in negotiating and monitoring the service level agreements held with the University of Manchester and SOAS, University of London (the ‘Connexional Collections’). These collections encompass both printed material and special collections of non-printed document material.
- To act as the point of liaison with academic institutions and collections both within and beyond the Methodist Church in the development and oversight of research projects using the connexional collections.
- To develop and promote projects that utilise the connexional and other collections to further the priorities of the Methodist Church.
- To support the work of the Liaison Officer for Methodist Archives (LOMA) appointed under SO 337(4) in carrying duties laid down in SO 015(1)(a) and to provide advice on matters of conservation, curating and promotion of collections, both the connexional collections and other collections in Methodist districts, circuits and institutions.
- To monitor copyright and other legal compliance issues and to work with the Conference Legal Officer in drafting deposit and other contractual agreements for approval by the Methodist Heritage Committee and Methodist Council.
- To support the Connexional Team and the wider Methodist Church in developing the connexional retention policy.

2.2.4 Options are being explored for the **digitisation** of the Wesleyan Methodist missionary records deposited at the SOAS Library, University of London..

- 2.2.5** Due to the absence of a standardised process or procedure for collection transfers from potential donors to designated repositories, the Heritage Committee approved a **Collection Transfer Protocol**, following the recommendations of ARAG.
- 2.2.6** The content of the **Methodist Heritage website** is being reviewed and will be enhanced, with a view to moving all the collections care and interpretation advice for heritage and records to the main Methodist Church website, and then refreshing the design of the Heritage site. Preparations are underway, including volunteer training in September, to enable the relaunch of the community archive websites in 2018, with a refreshed look and better user interface (see www.mymethodisthistory.org.uk).
- 2.3. Communications and Promotion**
- 2.3.1.** The Methodist Heritage handbook was revised and relaunched in autumn 2017. . The Handbook will be completely redesigned before its next publication.
- 2.3.2.** A special **heritage and archive networking event** was held in August 2018 at Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford under the title 'Telling Our Story: ten years of Methodist Heritage'. The event celebrated the achievements of Methodist Heritage to date. It also focused on working in partnership and provided workshops and presentations on that theme whilst encouraging discussion on its future strategic direction.
- 2.3.3** Following the approval of the **recognition criteria for Methodist heritage sites (MC/107/17 2.3.3.)**, the Heritage Officer has been working with three churches to test out the criteria to their situations in order to help develop the assessment tool. The three churches are all active churches, but at different stages in their use of heritage for mission. It is hoped that more progress will be made on this in 2019, including making nominations for the first Heritage Award.
- 2.3.4** A new initiative was the publication of a Heritage **Calendar 2019**, featuring the four key sites and other significant sites from the current Heritage Handbook. This was launched at the 2018 Methodist Conference. It is proposed that this becomes an annual publication, featuring different sites each year, linked to the recognition criteria.

3. Other developments

- 3.2** Two part time **project archivists** will be employed in the coming months to appraise the early 20th century Methodist Missionary Society material in the strong room in Methodist Church House basement. Once sensitive and confidential material has been removed it will be prepared to go to SOAS Library, University of London.

*****RESOLUTION**

- 85/1. The Council receives the report.**