

REPRESENTATIVE SESSION

ORDER OF BUSINESS

09:15 Opening Prayers

09:30 Administration

Report from the Business Committee (Order Paper pages 46-47)
Resolution B/4 (Order Paper page 47)

Agenda Item 35: Pension Schemes (pages 443-452, Order Paper page 51)
Resolutions 35/1, 35/2 (page 451), 35/3, 35/4, 35/5, 35/6, 35/7 (page 452),
35/8, 35/9 (Order Paper page 51)

Agenda Item 32: Review of Part 11 of Standing Orders (pages 391-433)
Resolutions 32/1, 32/2, 32/3, 32/4 (page 418), 32/5, 32/6, 32/7, 32/8, 32/9,
32/10, 32/11, 32/12, 32/13 (page 419)

Memorial M2: Disciplinary Process (pages 707-709)

11:00 Coffee Break

11:30 Bible Study

12:00 **Agenda Item 29: Safeguarding Committee** (pages 352-374, Order Paper page 50)
Resolutions 29/1 (page 354), 29/2 (Order Paper page 50)

Agenda Item 22: Methodist Council part 2
Section P: District Safeguarding Officers (pages 265-275, Order Paper page 49)
Resolutions 22/20 (page 275), 22/21 (Order Paper page 49), 22/22 (page 275)
Notice of Motion 2024/101: Amendments to Resolutions 22/21 and 22/22

Agenda Item 51: District Amalgamations (pages 656-660)
Resolutions 51/1, 51/2 (page 656), 51/3, 51/4 (page 658), 51/5, 51/6 (page
660)

13:00 Lunch

14:15 **Agenda Item 22: Methodist Council part 2**
Section G: Mission Committee (pages 198-211)
Resolution 22/3 (page 208), 22/4 (pages 208-211)
Notice of Motion 2024/102: Methodist Council, Section G: Methodist Children and
Youth Assembly

Memorial M12: Mission Partner Programme (pages 721-723)

Memorial M13: Mission Partners (page 724)

Notice of Motion 2024/103: Memorials 12 and 13

Agenda Item 22: Methodist Council part 2
Section H: Electing the President and Vice-President of the Conference (pages 211-213)
Resolutions 22/5, 22/6 (page 213)

Agenda Item 22: Methodist Council part 2
Section J: Justice, Dignity and Solidarity Committee (pages 217-220)
Resolution 22/9 (page 220)

Report of the JDS Scrutiny Group (Order Paper pages 51-53)
Resolution 22/9A (Order Paper page 53)

Agenda Item 22: Methodist Council part 2
Section T: Conference Scrutiny Committee (pages 284-288, Order Paper page 50)
Resolutions 22/28 (page 287), 22/29 (page 287-288)

Agenda Item 28: Role of a District Chair (pages 334-351)
Resolution 28/1 (page 351)

Agenda Item 50: Oversight and Trusteeship Section 4 (pages 568-579, Order Paper page 37)
Resolutions 50/10, 50/11 (page 579)

16:15 Tea Break

16:45 Daily Record

Agenda Item 14: 3Generate – the voice of children and young people of the Methodist Church in 2023 (pages 63-73)
Resolutions 14/1, 14/2, 14/3, 14/4, 14/5 (page 70)

Agenda Item 13: Methodist Independent Schools Trust (MIST) – Revision Articles of Association (pages 60-62, Order Paper pages 47-49)
Resolutions LP/2, 13/2 (Order Paper page 49)

Closed Session

18:15 Evening prayers

18:30 Adjourn

REPORT FROM THE CONFERENCE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

In the light of the amendments brought to Agenda item 13 (Methodist Independent Schools Trust – Revision to Articles of Association) by the Law and Polity Conference Sub-committee, the Business Committee informs the Conference that this report will be removed from the *en bloc* list.

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings from the gender diversity monitoring conducted at the Conference on 1 July 2024. There were a total of 57 speakers throughout the day. The data reveals a balanced male and female representation with 27 male, 28 female, two non-binary speakers. Speakers who were Lay: 20 (35%), Ordained: 37 (65%).

Introduction

The purpose of this monitoring is to gain an understanding of the gender distribution of speakers, giving an insight into issues of inclusion and representation. This report covers data collected on 1st July 2024. Further analysis will take place post Conference.

Methodology

Data were collected by volunteers who recorded the gender of speakers as described on their name badges and whether speakers were Lay or Ordained for each session. Tally sheets were compiled and analysed to provide an overview of gender diversity.

***RESOLUTION

B/4. The Conference receives the Report.

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS TO THE CONFERENCE AGENDA

AGENDA ITEM 13: METHODIST INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS TRUST (MIST) – REVISION TO ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION (Pages 60-62)

The Law and Polity Conference Sub-committee has considered the proposed revision of the MIST Articles of Association and reports to the Conference as follows.

Report

1. Under the present Articles of Association, any amendment requires the consent of the Conference which is to be evidenced by a resolution signed by the President of the Conference. The Law and Polity Conference Sub-committee, having considered a complete copy of the Articles containing the proposed revisions in draft form, is able to advise the Conference that the report at Agenda item 13 sets out at pp.60-62 the new form of the individual articles which will result from the proposed revision. For completeness, the Sub-committee draws to the attention of the Conference the fact, as there are no longer any schools falling under the definition of “Acquired Schools” (see the report at p.60) it is proposed to delete from article 2.2 the words “or Acquired School and to act as member of any Acquired School”, from article 16.2 the definition of “Acquired Schools” and from Schedule 1 the words “and Acquired Schools” in the title (which will read “The Schools and Associated Schools” as shown on p.61) and Part 3, listing the Acquired Schools.
2. The report in item 13 helpfully explains that the revisions are intended:
 - 2.1 to allow for the appointment of up to 17 Trustees (see the revised articles 3.2, 3.4.3 and 3.4.5 (the existing article 3.4.5, providing for a Connexional Representative Trustee, being deleted). This is a net increase in the maximum number of Trustees from 16 to 17 and is accompanied by an increase in the minimum number of Trustees from 10 to 11;
 - 2.2 to reduce the minimum proportion of Trustees who must be Methodists from one half to one third (again see the revised article 3.2);
 - 2.3 to reflect the preference expressed on behalf of the Methodist Church that there should no longer be a Connexional Representative Trustee but rather a Connexional Representative with the right to attend Trustee meetings and to

... speak but not to vote (see the revised articles 3.6 and 3.8.7, removing provisions relating to the Connexional Representative Trustee, the new article 4.9 and the new definition of “Connexional Representative” in article 16.2, by amendment to the previous definition of “Connexional Representative Trustee”

2.4 to cover “housekeeping” points resulting from the fact that there are no longer any Acquired Schools.

3. The Sub-committee notes that the numbering of the new article 4.9 results from an amendment to article 4.7, which has been divided into articles 4.7 and 4.8 so that the attendance of Heads at Trustees’ meetings is dealt with in a separate article from the attendance of the General Secretary and the Business Director of MIST. It further notes that there is additionally a new article 4.10, as shown on p.61. The existing 4.9 therefore becomes 4.11.
4. The Sub-committee does not perceive any difficulty with the principles of the revisions outlined above, but draws attention to the following points.
5. First, by way of clarification, “Chairs of Governors Trustees” is a term defined in article 16.2 to mean Trustees appointed on the recommendation of the Chairs of Governors (or as there set out). The Trustees do not themselves have to be Chairs of Governors.
6. Secondly, the existing articles contain in 16.2 a definition of “Methodist Council Trustees” as Trustees appointed on the nomination of the Methodist Council and the existing article 3.4.3 provides for the appointment of five Methodist Council Trustees. Although the report at p.61 refers to “Connexional Council Trustees” in a revised 3.4.3, no definition of “Connexional Council Trustees” is proposed and there is no proposal to delete the definition of “Methodist Council Trustees”. The Sub-committee’s understanding is that the Connexional Council Trustees are to be nominated by the Connexional Council, so that effectively the Connexional Council will replace the Methodist Council in this context. This will require further amendments to the Articles of Association, as reflected in the revised resolution 13/2 set out below.
7. Thirdly, in the Sub-committee’s view the Connexional Representative should be nominated by the Connexional Council rather than “the Methodist Church” and an amendment to the definition on p.61 is therefore proposed, again as reflected in the revised resolution 13/2. It is assumed that “or” at the end of line 2 of the definition of “Connexional Representative” is a typographical error for “for”.
8. Finally, the Sub-committee understands that Shebbear College has been sold and therefore should be deleted from Schedule 1 Part 1.
9. The Sub-committee advises the Conference that it can properly consent to the proposed revisions to the MIST Articles of Association subject to the further revisions identified above.
10. If the Conference consents to the proposed revisions as revised, the draft Standing Order 273 on p.611 of the Agenda will require to be amended to read:

(1) ...

(iii) up to ~~five~~ **six** persons nominated by the ~~Methodist~~ **Connexional** Council;

(iv) *one person nominated by the District Chairs;* and

(iv) up to ~~five~~ **six** persons nominated by the Company.

*****RESOLUTION**

LP/2. The Conference receives the report.

The proposed revised resolution 13/2 is as follows.

***** RESOLUTION**

13/2. The Conference consents to the revisions to the Articles of Association for the Methodist Independent Schools Trust as set out in the Report subject to the following further revisions:

(1) Add the following definitions in article 16.2 in alphabetical order:

“Connexional Council means the body of persons known by that name and constituted under the Deed of Union and the Standing Orders of the Methodist Church”

“Connexional Council Trustees means those trustees who have been appointed by the Conference on the nomination of the Connexional Council”;

(2) Delete the definition of “Methodist Council Trustees”;

(3) Amend the definition of “Connexional Representative” to read:

“Connexional Representative means an individual who is a senior staff member within the Connexional Team of the Methodist Church with responsibility for oversight of education and who, at the nomination of the Connexional Council, has been appointed ...”

(4) Delete “Shebbear College” from Schedule 1 Part 1.

**AGENDA ITEM 22, METHODIST COUNCIL, PART 2
SECTION G: MISSION COMMITTEE (Pages 198-211)**

Paragraph 21, Page 204

For recommends them to the Council

Read recommended them to the Council

**AGENDA ITEM 22: METHODIST COUNCIL, PART 2
SECTION P: DISTRICT SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS (Pages 265-275)**

Page 273, first paragraph

Line 3, *for* responsibly *read* responsibility

*****AMENDED RESOLUTION**

22/21. The Conference approves the principles of the proposed unified safeguarding structure outlined in the Report, notes the intention that the new structure be implemented by 1 September 2025 and directs the Safeguarding Committee, in consultation with the Law and Polity Committee, to bring the necessary Standing Order amendments to the Conference of 2025.

AGENDA ITEM 22: METHODIST COUNCIL, PART 2
SECTION T: CONFERENCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Pages 284-288)

SO 136A(1), Page 287

Line 5, ~~for the Connexional Treasurer read the Connexional Treasurer~~

Members of the Conference may wish to note that the amendments shown to this Standing Order have been drafted on the assumption that the amendments to Parts 2 and 3 of the Standing Orders contained in volume 2 of *The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church* proposed by the Oversight and Trusteeship Group report at Agenda item 50 will be approved by the Conference. If that is not the case, the necessary amendments will be brought by the Law and Polity Conference Sub-committee.

SO 136A(4), Page 288

Replace proposed clause (4) with:

(4) For the purposes of this Standing Order, an “impact assessment” is an assessment of the impact on the connexion as a whole in accordance with the provisions of clause (2) above of any proposal contained in material coming before the Conference.

AGENDA ITEM 29: SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE (Pages 352-374)

Page 353, Line 6

For should such a disclosure Read until such a disclosure

*****AMENDED RESOLUTION**

29/2. The Conference:

- (1) Reaffirms the requirements set out in Book VI Part 1 of *The Constitutional Practice and Discipline* relating to qualification for appointment and the duty of specified office-holders to obtain disclosures from the Disclosure and Barring Service or its equivalent in other jurisdictions;**
 - (2) Restates the policy set out in Part 4 of the Methodist Church’s *Safer Recruitment Policy, Procedures and Guidance* that checks should be renewed every five years and applications for renewal should be made in time to ensure that the new certificate is in place before the end of the five year period;**
 - (3) Draws attention to the responsibility of the relevant office-holders themselves to comply with the requirements of the Church’s safeguarding policies;**
 - (4) Notes that failure to do so constitutes a possible ground for suspension under Standing Order 013;**
 - (5) Expects responsible officers within the meaning of that Standing Order to consider the exercise of their power of suspension in cases of breach of the requirements identified above for the purpose of mitigating the risk of damage to those who are vulnerable and enhancing confidence that within the Methodist Church safeguarding precautions are taken seriously.**
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AGENDA ITEM 35: PENSION SCHEMES (Pages 443-452)

Paragraph 22, Page 451

Line 5 for turmoil crated *read* turmoil created

The Council agreed to recommend to the Conference the reappointment of Fred King and Anne Fairchild as directors of the Methodist Ministers' Pension Trust Limited for a period of three years commencing 1 September 2024.

*****ADDITIONAL RESOLUTION**

35/8. The Conference reappoints Fred King and Anne Fairchild as directors of the Methodist Ministers' Pension Trust Limited for a period of three years commencing 1 September 2024.

The legal documentation to amend the Framework Agreement in line with the provisions in this report has not yet been completed. As a consequence, it is necessary to delegate responsibility to the Connexional Council the finalisation and signing of the MMPS valuation in line with the principles in this paper.

*****ADDITIONAL RESOLUTION**

35/9. The Conference delegates to the Connexional Council the finalisation and signing of the Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme valuation.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE JUSTICE, DIGNITY AND SOLIDARITY SCRUTINY GROUP TO THE CONFERENCE

The JDS Scrutiny Group has continued to meet together during 2023/2024 and has also met with the Secretary of the Conference and the Connexional Secretary and with the Co-Chairs of the JDS Committee and the Director of Inclusion.

We are pleased that there has been movement on JDS strategy related issues during the year whilst recognising that some things have not been able to move as quickly as would have been wished due to the Implementation Officer role ending last summer and the new JDS Programme Co-ordinator not being able to be in post until this September. A detailed project plan has not yet been produced and therefore robust project management of the delivery of the JDS strategy is not yet in place. We continue to believe that the project plan will support the JDS Committee and ourselves in ensuring that the strategy moves forward in a timely manner with appropriate scrutiny.

We were pleased to see the report of the Susanna Wesley Foundation research carried out to explore awareness of and progress in implementing the Methodist Church's JDS strategy. It revealed that the strategy is welcomed but hardly off the ground in most local churches. They make a number of interesting points such as "Methodist culture blocks progress; whilst many Methodists would want to be working within a JDS approach, the culture of not wanting to make mistakes or change beloved ways of doing things mitigate against it happening. They say that "a greater sense of priorities and stages towards implementation is needed". They also recognise that "it may take many years for the Church to feel significantly different unless there is more connexional clarity and guidance on the steps to take in order to move forward".

The Susanna Wesley report also sets out that a joined up approach is needed; "existing connexional strategies and policies including safeguarding and "God for all" need to be

harmonised with the JDS approach (and vice versa)". Whilst recognising that there has been progress on developing such an approach, and on recommended work related to worship resources, we look forward to seeing further progress on these and other aspects of this helpful report.

We hope that discussion on the practical outworking of the structures as set out in the Trustee and Oversight work will be able to facilitate the needed joined up approach further. There has been some movement on this as set out in the JDS Committee report, but we hope that going forward the JDS awareness in all major policies of the Church including the ongoing stationing review and the outcomes of the review of part 11 of Standing Orders (Complaints and discipline). There is mention of the DARS programme in the Part 11 report but there is not clarity about how it would be integrated with all complaints including safeguarding although we understand that the Director of inclusion has been working with colleagues around safeguarding and Part 11 and we hope to see the connections made clearer. In adopting the resolutions in the Part 11 review report it would have been helpful to have spelled out which complaints – from Part 11, safeguarding and DARS will be included in the record management, case management and reporting systems and a simplified 3 tier model for addressing complaints (Recommendations 5, 6, 7 and 8) There has been active engagement with "Justice seeking church" and "God for all" colleagues and we look forward to this continuing. There has also been collaborative working with the Learning and Development team, and it is good to see training being encouraged and delivered around the Connexion including the EDI induction and the mandatory training. The work being done in Districts is also encouraging although standard record keeping would enable the Church to have more assurance about the training and other work being carried out. In relation to the Conference we welcome the proposal in part 2 of the Methodist Council report section T that on the recommendation of the JDS Committee the equality impact assessment will be incorporated alongside the Notice of Motion form to ensure issues related to discrimination can be actively considered and prevented. We look forward to the further work being considered to ascertain the reach and impact of the JDS strategy.

Unfortunately, there has not been an opportunity to have a meeting with representatives of the Oversight and Trusteeship Task Group (OTTG) who we know have had an enormous workload in looking at all the things which needed to be brought to the Conference this year. This means that we have not been able to follow up on the concerns we expressed in our report last year about how the JDS Committee will be able to exercise its responsibilities in Standing Orders under the new reporting arrangements, that is via the Mission Committee. No consultation was able to take place with the JDS Committee either. The difficulties around this are not covered in the latest Oversight and Trusteeship report. The SO re the Mission Committee does not set out its role in relation to the implementation of the JDS strategy or in ensuring that the JDS Committee has all the information that it needs in order to for example "Make strategic recommendations and give support and guidance to the council in all matters relating to equality, diversity and inclusion" (SO 330(2)(i)). We note the careful consideration that the Mission Committee has given to other areas of its responsibility and are aware that it takes its own responsibilities with regard to JDS matters seriously. We are, however, disappointed that the JDS Committee Chair is not on the Connexional Council alongside the Chairs of the Mission, Ministries, Resourcing and Audit and Risk Assurance Committees as JDS matters are integral to all of the work of the Church – trusteeship, ministries and resourcing as well as mission. It has been agreed that conversations will need to take place to ensure that all the affected bodies have a shared understanding of the way forward and any subsequent proposals for changes to reporting or Standing Orders brought to the 2025 Conference. This may be the kind of thing that the Task Group envisage when saying in their report that "All Committees, working parties and task groups will need a "Ways of Working document". We would be happy to be part of such discussions. We hope that such conversations will also include SO 221 related to the scrutiny group.

In summary we reflect further on these words from the Susanna Wesley report that “implementing the JDS strategy is both an important and difficult task” and look forward to further progress during the coming year.

*****RESOLUTION**

22/9A. The Conference receives the Report.

Conferring on the Justice Priority of poverty – what was heard

On Monday the Conference conferred on the Justice Priority of poverty. The Conference was given two questions to consider – where they saw signs of God at work and how God might be calling us to join in. This is a brief summary of the themes which emerged. A fuller analysis of the responses will be made available at methodist.org.uk/justice.

We heard about a Church which is very actively responding to hardship, but feeling its way into a future into which God is calling us.

Thinking about the justice priority of tackling inequality and poverty: Where do you see signs of God at work among the injustices in your community?

We hear ways in which churches are responding to hardship in their communities: foodbanks, community meals, pantries, lunch clubs, warm spaces, night shelters, debt advice, school uniform recycling, provision for digital exclusion, help to overcome barriers faced by individuals and communities in rural areas, and support for refugees and asylum seekers were mentioned by many.

Whilst most churches appear more comfortable responding practically to hardship, some frustration is apparent with service provision as a response to poverty. There is some growing desire to go beyond social action to challenge the causes of injustice. *“People are wanting to challenge politics, and God’s prompting is part of this.”* For some, signs of God at work were noticed in the *“rediscovery of the potential for ordinary people to make a noise and make a difference”*, through tools like faith rooted community organising.

God’s transformation in the world is noticed through the deepening of relationships with others, as church members move to *“being alongside people, rather than doing for”* them, noticing God working through *“unexpected vessels”* in the wider community rather than just through the church, as well as being open to our own personal and communal learning and change.

How is God calling us to join in? How could we use our gifts, skills and resources as a Church to tackle the injustice of poverty?

There is openness to discerning what God is calling us into, but less confidence yet about what this will look like. Some are drawn to social action as a continuing response. However several themes emerge which offer other opportunities.

We hear of the desire for worship, prayer and preaching in our churches which help us to be more faithful in our acting for justice. There were affirmations that Church at the Margins and New Places for New People are ways in which we can join in with where God is at work.

We are challenged as churches as to how we use our material resources and people, and in particular how we invest resources in areas of economic deprivation rather than withdraw from them.

We are clear that partnerships are both an area of existing strength and future potential, both locally and nationally. We are challenged to listen deeply to what communities want and need, rather than assume we know. Community organising was named as a tool for bridging the gap which can occur between communities and churches.

We feel we are being called to speak up, engaging with politicians beyond elections, and using the skilled campaigners amongst our networks to make an impact.

We are called to change our own attitudes. This requires listening and empathy, building friendships and relationships.

We sense encouragement to take risks alongside people in our communities, and to be more courageous and innovative as we respond to injustices.

Thanks are expressed to Conference members who indicated their interest in being involved in this Priority work further, and they will be contacted shortly.

BIBLE STUDY

Objective: for the church to repent of the tendency to abandon the least resourced communities and recognise that the Christian model of justice is relational

1 Corinthians 12:14, 21-23, 24

¹⁴ Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' ²² On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect;

²⁴ whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member,

Luke 10:33-35

³³ But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend."

Revelation 3:3

³ Remember then what you received and heard; obey it, and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.

Question: Whose side is the church on - and what do we need to repent?