

6/1 The Conference assembled at 9.15 and shared in worship.

6/2 **REPORT FROM THE CONFERENCE BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

6/2/1 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.

6/2/2 The Conference adopted as Resolution B/4:

The Conference receives the Report.

6/3 **35. PENSION SCHEMES**

6/3/1 The Conference adopted Resolution 35/1,

p 451, paragraph 22, line 5,  
*for 'turmoil crated' reading 'turmoil created'*

6/3/2 The Conference adopted Resolutions 35/2, 35/3, 35/4, 35/5, 35/6 and 35/7.

6/3/3 The Conference adopted as 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.

6/3/4 The Conference adopted as Resolution 35/9:

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

6/4 **32. REVIEW OF PART 11 OF STANDING ORDERS**

6/4/1 The Conference adopted Resolutions 32/1, 32/2, 32/3, 32/4, 32/5, 32/6, 32/7, 32/8, 32/9, 32/10, 32/11, 32/12 and 32/13.

6/4/2 **Memorial M2**

The Conference received Memorial M2 and adopted as its reply that recommended by the Memorials Committee, the Memorial and the reply appearing on Agenda pp 707-709.

6/5 The Conference adjourned at 10.42.

6/6 The Conference reassembled at 10:47.

6/7 **22. METHODIST COUNCIL, PART 2, Section H**

6/7/1 The Conference adopted Resolution 22/5.

6/7/2 The Conference adopted Resolution 22/6 in the form:

The Conference adopts the revised policy for electing the President and Vice-President of the Conference as set out in the Report and directs the Law and Polity Committee to prepare new Standing Orders to give effect to it, taking into account issues raised in this debate.

6/8 The Conference adjourned at 10.59.

6/9 The Conference reassembled at 11.33.

6/10 The Conference engaged in Bible study, led by Jenny Sinclair of Together for the Common Good.

6/11 **29. SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE**

6/11/1 The Conference adopted Resolution 29/1,

p 353, first paragraph, line 6,  
for 'should such a disclosure' reading 'until such a disclosure'

6/11/2 The Conference adopted Resolution 29/2 in the form:

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.

6/12 **22. METHODIST COUNCIL, PART 2, Section P**

6/12/1 The Conference adopted Resolution 22/20,  
 p 273, first paragraph, line 2,  
 for 'clear responsibly' reading 'clear responsibility'

6/12/2 The Conference adopted Resolution 22/21 in the form:

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.

6/12/3 The Conference adopted Resolution 22/22.

6/13 The Conference adjourned at 13.01.

6/14 The Conference reassembled at 14.15.

6/15 **51. DISTRICT AMALGAMATIONS**

The Conference adopted Resolutions 51/1, 51/2, 51/3, 51/4, 51/5 and 51/6.

6/16 **28. THE ROLE OF A DISTRICT CHAIR**

The Conference adopted Resolution 28/1.

6/17 **50. OVERSIGHT AND TRUSTEESHIP (continued)**

6/17/1 The Conference adopted Resolution 50/10,

p 577, SO 426(2)(iii), *amending* to read:

(iii) the appointment shall be for a specified period not exceeding ~~three~~**five** years in the first instance (but capable of extension for a further period or periods each of which shall not exceed three years, *[then continuing as on Agenda p 577]*)

p 578, SO 426(6)(i)

for '***be in the active work stationed***' reading '***be in the active work and stationed***'

6/17/2 The Conference, with the required majority, adopted Resolution 50/11.

6/18 **22. METHODIST COUNCIL, PART 2, Section G, J, T**

6/18/1 The Conference adopted Resolution 22/3,

p 204, paragraph 21, line 3,  
*for 'recommends' reading 'recommended'*

6/18/2 The Conference adopted Resolution 22/4.

6/18/3 **Memorials M12, M13**

The Conference received Memorials M12 and M13 and adopted as its replies those recommended by the Memorials Committee, the Memorials and the replies appearing on Agenda pp 721-724,

p 723, third paragraph  
line 3, *for 'a range of option' reading 'a range of options'*  
line 5, *for 'with who' reading 'with whom'*

6/18/4 The Conference adopted Resolution 22/9.

6/18/5 **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.

6/18/6 The Conference adopted as Resolution 22/9A:

The Conference receives the Report.

6/18/7 The Conference adopted Resolution 22/28.

6/18/8 The Conference adopted Resolution 22/29,

p 287, SO 136A(1), line 5,

*for ‘the Connexional Treasurer’ reading ‘the Connexional Treasurer’*

p 288, SO 136A(4), *replacing* 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.***

6/19 **13. METHODIST INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS TRUST (MIST) – REVISION TO ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION**

6/19/1 The Conference adopted Resolution 13/1.

6/19/2 **Report from the Law and Polity Conference Sub-committee**

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

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

6/19/3 The Conference adopted as Resolution LP/2:

The Conference receives the report.

6/19/4 The Conference adopted Resolution 13/2 in the form:

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.

6/20 The Conference adjourned at 16.08.

6/21 The Conference reassembled at 16.45.

6/22 **DAILY RECORD**

The Daily Record for Monday 1 July was presented, taken as read, and adopted,

5/20/2, *noting* the following further amendment to the reply to Memorial M6 on p 715:

and *replacing* the second paragraph of the reply with:

The Conference accepts the memorial and affirms its prayerful solidarity with the Nassar family. The Conference welcomes the representations made to the Embassy of Israel and the British Government by the Secretary of the Conference in April 2024. The Conference directs the Secretary to ensure that a letter of support is written to the Nassar family and that appropriate further



representations are made, drawing attention in such representations to the appeal of the Sheffield Circuit and this reply, and encourages local churches, circuits and districts which are making their own representations also to draw attention to the appeal and this reply. The Conference also expresses appreciation for the international Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem and its work in facilitating relationships and encounter between Palestinians, Israelis and Methodist people worldwide.

5/27, for EVANGELISM reading EVANGELISM

6/23 **14. 3GENERATE – THE VOICE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN BRITAIN 2023**

The Conference adopted Resolutions 14/1, 14/2, 14/3, 14/4 and 14/5.

6/24 **Notice of Motion 2024/201: Fairtrade**

6/24/1 Notwithstanding the preference of the President and Vice-President for Yorkshire Tea, the Conference recalls previous resolutions that Conference venues should be required to provide Fairtrade beverages, notes that in recent years this has not always been the case and reaffirming its commitment to Fairtrade, the Conference calls on those responsible for booking venues to take notes of these resolutions in future.

6/24/2 The Conference adopted the Motion.

6/25 The Conference went into closed session at 18.05.

6/26 A report was presented to the Conference on behalf of the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice regarding the reporting of serious incidents to the Charity Commission.

6/27 A report was presented to the Conference on behalf of the Conveners of Connexional Discipline and Appeal Committees regarding disciplinary processes concluded during the past year.

6/28 The Secretary of the Conference updated the Conference on a matter of concern from the 2023 Conference.

6/29 The Conference reassembled in open session at 18.15.

6/30 The Conference shared in worship, and adjourned at 18.30.

6/31 **LETTERS**

6/31/1 A letter was sent in the name of the Conference to The Revd Stuart Earl, thanking him for six years' service on the Presbyterian Ordinands' Retreat team.

6/31/2 A letter of concern was sent in the name of the Conference to Beatrice Cloke, a past member of the Conference.

6/31/3 A letter of sympathy was sent in the name of the Conference to Jane Goodfellow, a member of this year's Conference.

6/31/4 A letter was sent in the name of the Conference to Jenny Sinclair, director of Together for the Common Good, thanking her for the three Bible studies she has contributed to the Conference.

- 6/31/5 A letter was sent in the name of the Conference to David Orford, thanking him for his work as consultant in the review of the complaints and discipline processes.
- 6/31/6 A letter was sent in the name of the Conference to Bishop Juan Simpson of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas, offering the concern of the Conference following Hurricane Beryl.