

## 2. First Report of the Conference Business Committee

<b>Contact name and details</b>	The Revd Dr Jonathan R Hustler Secretary of the Conference SoC@methodistchurch.org.uk
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### 1. **Membership of the Conference Business Committee**

The Council was notified that Mr Dudley Coates had stepped down as Chair of the Conference Business Committee, and nominates the Revd Loraine Mellor to the Conference as Chair of the Conference Business Committee for the 2024 Conference. Mrs Mellor has previously served as Chair of the Conference Business Committee for the 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 Conferences and brings wide experience and understanding of the Conference, including as President in 2017/2018, and chairs meetings with wisdom, clarity and pastoral sensitivity.

The Conference Business Committee for 2024 will therefore comprise the Revd Loraine N Mellor (chair), Barbara Easton, Daniel Keen, Anna Malnutt, the Revd Andrew W Fyall, the Revd Leigh Maydew, the Revd Mmasape Thathane-Tyolweni. One of the ministerial members of the Committee elected by the 2023 Conference had to withdraw from the Committee, and the Council therefore appointed the Revd Andrew W Fyall under the terms of SO 136(1C).

### 2. **Meetings and reports**

- The Business Committee will meet on Saturday 29 June at the close of business, following the Scrutineers' briefing.
- The Scrutineers are asked to meet for a briefing on Saturday 29 June immediately at the close of business.
- The Business Committee will report each day in the Order Paper. It will indicate any variations to the outline schedule printed in the Agenda.

### 3. **Notices of Motion**

Standing Order 132 reads as follows:

**132 Notices of Motion.** (1) Subject to Standing Order 131(4) any two members may upon notice of motion complying with this Standing Order bring before the Conference any lawful resolution within the competence of the Conference.

(1A) Every notice of motion shall be handed to the Secretary in written form and signed by the following persons:

- (i) where the proposal is to amend a resolution and those responsible for presenting that business to the Conference are prepared to accept it, the proposer and seconder of the motion;

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- (ii) where such a proposal to amend is not accepted by those responsible, the proposer and seconder and four other persons;
- (iii) in all other cases, the proposer and seconder and eight other persons.

(2) Only on matters of urgency, so judged by the President after consultation with the Vice-President, shall notices of motion in the Representative Session be accepted after 4.30pm on the third day of the session, except that a notice of motion proposing to amend a resolution circulated or materially altered on or after the first day of the session shall be accepted if lodged before the close of business on the day before the resolution is to be dealt with.

- 3.1 A Notice of Motion is the proper way for members of Conference to invite the Conference to take different decisions from the resolutions in the Conference Agenda. Such Notices of Motion are published in a series numbered from 100 (printed on green paper). Notices of Motion which do not relate to the business set out in the Agenda are published in a second series numbered from 200 (printed on yellow paper).
- 3.2 The 2013 Conference agreed that it should be mandatory for proposers of Notices of Motion to complete a 'Submission of a Notice of Motion' form, including information about budgetary implications. The 2021 Conference directed the Council to establish a framework to analyse the cumulative impact of all resolutions brought to the Conference and the notice of motion form has therefore been developed to take account of this and to enable the work of the new Conference Scrutiny Sub-Committee. The form is available to download from the website, and from the Conference Office (email [conferenceoffice@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:conferenceoffice@methodistchurch.org.uk)) prior to the Conference or from the Help Desk at the Conference.
- 3.3 The Committee encourages members of the Conference to adhere to the following principles when bringing Notices of Motion:
  - (a) The Notice of Motion must be brought about a matter that is urgent and could not have been brought as a memorial or district resolution;
  - (b) The Notice of Motion must be within the competence of the Conference and if it requests something of another body over which it does not have jurisdiction (eg MHA, Action for Children), it must be phrased in an appropriate way;
  - (c) The Notice of Motion must be properly researched beforehand – it is not possible for those advising the Conference (including the officers of the Conference) to undertake background work in the time available;

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- (d) The Notice of Motion must be drafted in such a way, that if passed by the Conference, it can be implemented;
  - (e) The Notice of Motion must not require the Conference to make a policy decision without adequate background information and thought given to the consequences;
  - (f) The Notice of Motion, if passed, must not require such a level of resource that would require resources (human and financial) to be diverted from other areas of agreed work. To this extent if the Conference Financial Committee rules that the Notice of Motion cannot be accommodated within the contingency provided in the Central Services Budget, the Business Committee might need to rule that the Notice of Motion cannot be put before the Conference without further work on the part of the movers on how resources might be found.
- 3.4 In enabling Conference members to submit Notices of Motion related to business scheduled for the afternoon and evening of Saturday 29 June, the Business Committee requests that these be submitted by email to [batesj@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:batesj@methodistchurch.org.uk) to arrive not later than Friday 28 June at 2.00pm. The Committee has determined that it will only require the names (which will be printed on the Order Paper) of a proposer and a seconder to be supplied at this stage: the four further signatories, should the Notice of Motion be resisted by the proposer of the resolution (as per SO 132(1A)(ii)), may therefore be acquired after arrival at the Conference on Saturday 29 June but must be handed to the Record Office by 1.00pm on that day. Members of the Conference are encouraged to submit notices of motion electronically, however, all signatories' information will need to be verified (by use of the email address which has been submitted for the purposes of voting and other communications during the Conference). This means that any member of the Conference who agrees to be a signatory to a notice of motion must either provide a signature to the Record Office or respond to an email from the Record Office before the deadline for the submission of that notice of motion.
- 3.5 Further, for the Business Committee to prepare the business to be conducted on Monday 1 July, members of the Conference who wish to submit Notices of Motion relating to the business to be taken on Monday, or amended replies to any memorials to be taken with it, are requested to hand them to the Record Office by 5.30pm on Saturday 29 June.
- 3.6 Similarly, Notices of Motion relating to items of business to be taken on Tuesday 2 July should be submitted by 12.30pm on Monday. This, and the deadlines in the previous paragraphs, will enable the Business Committee to prepare full and informed Order Papers for the smooth transaction of business.

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3.7 Having set out in the preceding paragraphs the proposed timings for Notices of Motion in general, the Business Committee wishes to make provision for dealing with any which impact the connexional budget and proposes a specific timetable to that end. Its purpose is to ensure that the Conference is able to take decisions about the budget when all the relevant information is to hand and to avoid the pitfall of making choices or judgements based on partial information. It is therefore recommended that:

- The budget will be presented on Saturday evening.
- Any Notices of Motion which would have the effect of amending the budget shall be submitted by 12.30pm on Monday through the usual channels.
- The Conference Financial Committee will consider the implications of the proposed amendments at the close of Monday's session and present a report in Tuesday's Order Paper.
- The Conference will then consider Notices of Motion and memorials which impact the budget on Tuesday morning and will engage in discussion of the budget at that point.
- The budget will then be formally confirmed and adopted on Wednesday afternoon.

In summary, the deadlines for submitting Notices of Motion are as follows:

<b>Relating to</b>	<b>Submit by</b>
Saturday's business	Friday 2.00pm
Monday's business	Saturday 5:30pm
Tuesday's business	Monday 12.30pm
Wednesday's business	Monday 4.30pm
Unrelated to business	Monday 4.30pm

3.8 Those proposing a Notice of Motion should consult with those presenting the business to ascertain whether the Notice of Motion will be accepted or resisted. Lists of those responsible for presenting each item of business are available from the Record Office or the Chair of the Business Committee.

3.9 The Business Committee notes that, under the terms of SO 136(2)(ii), it may recommend to the Conference which Notices of Motion are debated in the Conference and which are dealt with in some other way. The Committee will keep this under review, and may propose that, in respect of Notices of Motion in the 200 series (ie those that do not relate to business in the Conference Agenda),

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members of the Conference be invited to notify the President (by email to [conferenceoffice@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:conferenceoffice@methodistchurch.org.uk)) by a specified deadline if they wish to oppose such Notices of Motion. Where there are no requests to oppose such notices of motion, the motion would then be moved by the proposer, who will have a speech limit of two minutes, before the Conference proceeds immediately to a vote.

- 3.10 The 2011 Conference approved the principle of enabling those Notices of Motion that do not relate to business already in the Agenda to be prioritised, by means of a ballot, should time not permit all such Notices of Motion to be considered. Should such a ballot be required, it will be held on the morning of Tuesday 2 July. Any such Notices of Motion which are not considered during the Conference will be dealt with as in the next paragraph.
- 3.11 The Business Committee may recommend that a particular Notice of Motion is not considered by the Conference but is referred to the Connexional Council in the coming year. The Council is required to report back to the following Conference its judgement on that Notice of Motion.
- 3.12 In order for the Business Committee to test, on the floor of the Conference, its own judgements about which Notices of Motion to refer to the Connexional Council without debate, on the afternoon of Tuesday 2 July the Chair of the Business Committee will move that the Conference adopts the list of Notices of Motion that the Committee recommends be referred to the Council. The Conference will be able to amend the list without the need of a written Notice of Motion.

### **4. Use of time**

- 4.1 The Conference is reminded that the decision to shorten the Conference by most of a day (at least seven hours of business time) will inevitably increase the pressure on time this year. The Business Committee will be particularly concerned this year to monitor the progress of business and may deem it necessary to bring further proposals during the Conference to ensure that the Conference is able to deal properly and expeditiously with the business before it. In particular, the Conference will need to begin work at pace from Monday morning. In addition members of the Conference are particularly encouraged to raise points of clarification personally or by email with those named as responsible for each item of business before the Conference rather than taking up time on the floor of the Conference.
- 4.2 Members of the Conference will want to ensure that their time is spent wisely and effectively. To this end, the Business Committee will endeavour to ensure

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that as far as possible, business follows the schedule published. As well as those who visit the Conference for particular debates, increasing numbers of people watch its proceedings on the Internet, especially when the Conference debates items on specific matters of interest, and rely on the published schedule being observed. Therefore, without wishing to deny anyone the opportunity to speak or to curtail debate unhelpfully, the Business Committee strongly urges members of the Conference to maintain the discipline of keeping to its schedule. It is unfair to have to foreshorten business scheduled for later in the week because earlier items have overrun.

4.3 With this in mind, the Business Committee asks that:

- speeches are not made unnecessarily when it is evident that the outcome is clear;
- representatives refrain from making speeches or comments that have already been made and from repeating what has been said and heard; and
- the Conference focuses on reaching decisions with the minimum necessary debate that does the subject justice.

4.4 The Committee proposes the following hours of session from Monday 1 July: 9:15-11:00; 11:30-13:00; 14:15-16:15; 16:45-18:30.

***The Conference will adjourn no later than 16:00 on Wednesday 3 July.***

### 5. Addressing the Conference

When addressing the Conference, representatives are asked to begin with 'Madam President' or 'Madam Vice-President' as appropriate, and then introduce themselves with their name and the capacity in which they are a member of the Conference. The Committee asks members of the Conference to bear in mind that web streaming enables a wider audience for Conference debates; representatives are therefore asked to consider their contributions to debates in the light of that. However, speeches should be addressed to members of the Conference and not those watching either from the public gallery or via the live stream.

It is recommended that presenters of business have four minutes and speakers two minutes. The Committee proposes a speech limit of two minutes as a means of facilitating the business which this Conference has before it, and enabling the Conference to hear a range of speakers and views in debates. Depending on the timing of the business, these allocations may be increased or decreased with the approval of the President and Vice-President. Where there is a number of resolutions attached to a report, the Committee recommends that presenters are

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allowed four minutes to introduce the report as a whole, and a further minute to introduce each subsequent resolution should that be required.

The speech limits outlined in the previous paragraph will be adapted for those speakers who have additional needs. The Committee wishes to ensure that all members of the Conference are able fully to participate, and therefore the speech limits will be applied with flexibility in those cases. It would be helpful, therefore, if those with particular needs who intend to speak could let the Business Committee know, via the Record Office,<sup>1</sup> what adaptations need to be made.

### 6. Memorials

It is anticipated that all memorials will be dealt with during the Conference, ie taken with existing business to which they relate, debated separately or the replies adopted *en bloc*, based on the recommendations of the Memorials Committee.

### 7. Nominations

All nominees for President-Designate and Vice-President-Designate are to be photographed and their details displayed on a screen. The arrangements for this will be notified on Saturday's Order Paper at the Conference.

Nominations for designation of **President and Vice-President of the Conference** of 2025 must be on the prescribed form and placed in ballot boxes as early as possible and at the very latest by **1:00pm on Monday 1 July**. They will be displayed as soon as possible on Monday; voting will close at 6.00pm on Tuesday; the results will be announced on Wednesday. The Secretary of the Conference will need to contact all nominees for these offices, to confirm that they are willing to serve should they be elected.

Nominations for **Conference Business Committee members**: you are asked to follow **strictly** the instructions on the nomination form. Please ensure that you seek the consent of persons nominated and complete the forms fully and clearly. The election timetable will be the same as for the President and Vice-President, as above. It should be noted the election to the Conference Business Committee does not carry a right of membership of succeeding Conferences. Members of the Business Committee are required to be members of the Conference, and therefore if they are subsequently not elected as a representative by their Synod they will not be able to take up their place on the Committee.

This year, one Business Committee member, a minister, is required to be elected and may serve for the three years 2025-2027.

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<sup>1</sup> An announcement will be made as to how best to contact the Record Office during the Conference.

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In summary, the deadlines for nominations and elections are as follows:

<b>Election</b>	<b>Nominations close</b>	<b>Voting closes</b>
President of the Conference	Monday 1:00pm	Tuesday 6.00pm
Vice-President of the Conference	Monday 1:00pm	Tuesday 6.00pm
Conference Business Committee: Representative Session	Monday 5.30pm	Tuesday 6.00pm

### 8. **Provisional legislation**

Under Standing Order 122, any two members, by Notice of Motion, may propose that an item agreed by the Conference be referred to the Synods as a **provisional resolution** before being proposed for final adoption by the Conference next year.

### 9. **Letter-writing**

Any member of the Conference requesting that a letter be sent on behalf of the Conference should note the following criteria and procedure:

- a. The Conference writes automatically to those who have served in ordained ministry for 70 or more years, and those celebrating the 25th, 50th or 60th anniversaries of their ordinations; their names will be prepared in advance.
- b. The Conference will write, for a specific reason, to those who have a direct link with the Conference, or represent the World Church, or have an ecumenical relationship with the Methodist Church, or have a claim to achievements that are outstanding in the life of the Church or on its behalf.
- c. The letter-writer, with consultation as necessary, will be the appropriate person to give guidance to Conference members as to whether a proposed letter is within the criteria.
- d. Requests for letters to be sent must be submitted on a standard form, giving all the required details, to the Help Desk, who will receive them on behalf of the letter-writer. Forms are available from the Help Desk.
- e. The recipients of letters will be listed in the Daily Record for the information of the Conference.

### 10. **En bloc items**

All the reports before the Conference carry significance, and the decisions of the Conference upon them are important in various ways. The list of items to be taken *en bloc* is not a list of items which are less important than the rest of the Agenda, but a list of those items which the Business Committee has judged, because of the limitations on time, not to require a separate debate. This list will



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include some memorials to the Conference, and recommendations on those are made on the advice of the Memorials Committee.

The Business Committee will publish its proposed list of items of business to be taken *en bloc* in a separate report in Volume Two of the Conference Agenda.

Under the terms of SO 134A, if Notices of Motion are received about items in the *en bloc* list those items will automatically be removed from the list. In addition, by giving notice to the Secretary of the Conference (via Jane Bates at batesj@methodistchurch.org.uk), any six members of the Conference may, without proposing an amendment, require that an item be removed from the list and debated. This provision includes any Memorials which are designated as being in the *en bloc* list. Such notice must be given before the close of business on Monday 1 July (SO 134A(1)(c)).

### \*\*\*RESOLUTIONS

- 2/1. **The Conference receives paragraph 1 of the Report, and appoints the Revd Loraine N Mellor as Chair of the Conference Business Committee for the 2024 Conference.**
- 2/2. **The Conference adopts the First Report of the Business Committee.**