

43. Designations for Appointment of District Chairs

***RESOLUTIONS

- 43/1. The Conference designates for appointment the Revd Dr James N Tebbutt as Chair for the North West England District for a period of six years from 1 September 2024.
- 43/2. The Conference designates for appointment the Revd Helen R Hollands as Chair for the East Anglia District for a period of six years from 1 September 2024.
- 43/3. The Conference designates for appointment the Revd Rachel A Bending as Chair for the Southampton District for a period of six years from 1 September 2024.
- 43/4. The Conference designates for appointment the Revd Dr Jonathan Dean as Chair for the London District for a period of six years from 1 September 2024.
- 43/5. The Conference designates for appointment the Revd Victoria J Atkins as Chair for the Sheffield District for a period of six years from 1 September 2025.
- 43/6. The Conference designates for appointment the Revd Jonathan A Sewell as Chair for the Newcastle upon Tyne District for a period of six years from 1 September 2024.

The following resolutions require a majority of 75%.

- 43/7. The Conference designates for appointment the Revd Kerry W Tankard as Chair for the Yorkshire West District for a further period of five years from 1 September 2025.
- 43/8. The Conference designates for appointment the Revd Novette S Headley as Chair for the Birmingham District for a further period of one year from 1 September 2025.
- 43/9. The Conference designates for appointment the Revd S Mark Slaney as Chair for the Shetland and Scotland Districts for a further period of four years from 1 September 2025.
- 43/10. The Conference designates for appointment the Revd Helen R Kirk as Chair for the Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District for a further period of five years from 1 September 2025.

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Reasoned Statements:

The Revd Dr James Tebbutt

James Tebbutt has served as Chair of the Cumbria District since 2019. He will bring to this new role a pastoral heart, organisational gifts, ecumenical commitment, and an ability to think strategically. He empowers and encourages others in his relational leadership style.

Dr Tebbutt has been part of the regional review group which designed the innovative working methods that will be adopted and has a wide knowledge of the new District, having served in Circuit in the Manchester and Stockport District earlier in his ministry. He offers to the new District the theologically informed understanding and experience of collaborative leadership which is needed as the District navigates the next stage of its development.

The Synods of the present Bolton and Rochdale, Cumbria, Lancashire, Liverpool, and Manchester and Stockport Districts recommend to the Conference that the Revd Dr James N Tebbutt is appointed to serve as Chair for the North West England District for a period of six years from 1 September 2024.

The Revd Helen Hollands

Helen Hollands is Superintendent Minister of the South Kent Circuit and Assistant Chair of the South East District. She has a background in law, having lectured at the University of Kent, as well as offering oversight and pastoral care to students, and has a Masters Degree in Systematic Theology. She is an accredited supervisor and has received training in conflict transformation, safeguarding and in various topics to do with being a school governor.

Helen offers effective spiritual leadership, is a skilled communicator and works collaboratively with others. She has demonstrated her ability to contribute as a senior leader of the church by deputising for the District Chair in a number of contexts and she is committed to ecumenical engagement, currently serving as the Co-Chair of the Kent Church Leaders Group, having previously served as an Ecumenical Officer for the South East District. Helen's pastoral sensitivity is widely appreciated, as is her wisdom in dealing with situations of conflict in which she has engaged on the District's behalf.

Helen is a very skilled and fine leader within the life of our Church. Not only can she exercise the essentials of ministry well, such as chairing meetings, ensuring good governance in the churches and Circuit under her direct oversight, preaching and

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teaching, and pastoral care; she is also able to lead with vision and graciousness, building up her lay and ordained colleagues by the trust she places in them and the care she offers them. Helen's approach to relationships is open, inclusive and welcoming. Equally Helen is not afraid to address the challenges of ministry and context, helping the Church to face the future squarely and honestly. Helen's ministry, like her preaching and teaching, is rooted in her deep Christian faith, and especially in her appreciation of Methodist theology and practice.

The Synod recommends to the Conference that the Revd Helen Hollands is appointed to serve as Chair for the East Anglia District for a period of six years from 1 September 2024.

The Revd Rachel Bending

Rachel Bending is Superintendent of the Ealing Circuit in the London District. She brings a calm presence and a commitment to listening and working with others in order to lead the District's response to the challenges of the mid-21st century. She is passionate about the continued development of reflective supervision and the processes that are needed to ensure that churches are safe, welcoming and inclusive. With 23 years of experience in circuit ministry and a track record of fostering good ecumenical relationships and establishing new work whilst carefully pastoring existing expressions of faithfulness, Rachel will challenge the District to take risks, to be open to different perspectives, and to be joyful as it responds to God's call in the next stage of its mission.

The Synod recommends to the Conference that the Revd Rachel Bending is appointed to serve as Chair for the Southampton District for a period of six years from September 2024.

The Revd Dr Jonathan Dean

Jonathan Dean has twenty-two years of presbyteral ministry, in circuit, academic, ministerial training and Connexional Team appointments in Britain and in the United States. He offers to the District a passion for the gospel, a deep and beautifully articulated spirituality, a pastoral understanding of the position of lay and ordained colleagues and an ability to inspire and encourage. The Synod believes that his gifts will complement those of others in the leadership of the District in a confident and collaborative exercise of ministry.

The Synod recommends to the Conference that the Revd Dr Jonathan Dean is appointed to serve as Chair for the London District for a period of six years from September 2024.

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The Revd Victoria Atkins

The Revd Vicky Atkins is currently serving as Superintendent of the Calderdale Circuit. She has previously served as a presbyter in two circuits and as Chaplain to the Woodhouse Grove School; prior to that she was a deacon, serving as a District Mission and Evangelism Enabler and in a circuit diaconal appointment. Before following her call into ministry, Vicky spent time in social work, managing teams of volunteers and prior to this taught art therapy to adults and children – which is something she has continued to utilise in her ministry. The Synod believes that she will bring a broad range of skills and a depth of experience in strategic leadership, pastoral care, creativity and oversight to the role of Chair of the Sheffield District.

The Synod recommends to the Conference that the Revd Victoria Atkins is appointed to serve as Chair for the Sheffield District for a period of six years from September 2025.

The Revd Jonathan Sewell

The Revd Jona Sewell currently serves as Superintendent Minister of the Newcastle West Circuit, having previously served in two sections of the North Shields and Whitley Bay Circuit. Prior to training for ordained ministry Jona spent time as a pastoral worker in the Church of England and as a family worker for an LEP, as well as serving in the hospitality industry. He is a trained spiritual director and has demonstrated his ability to show effective spiritual leadership with clear missional focus. The Synod believes that Jona is a deeply spiritual, pastorally responsive minister, bringing a prophetic voice into leadership, as well as being able to handle difficult situations with sensitivity, wisdom and an understanding of the Chair's role in exercising discipline, care and oversight.

The Synod recommends to the Conference that the Revd Jonathan Sewell is appointed to serve as Chair for the Newcastle upon Tyne District for a period of six years from September 2024.

The Revd Kerry Tankard

Kerry Tankard has served as Chair for the Yorkshire West District since 2019. He offers the District strong leadership and guidance. He leads with quiet authority, is perceptive yet challenging, with a probing mind and he is not afraid to lead where a decision needs to be made.

Kerry is helpful and approachable in areas of pastoral support. He is seen to be compassionate, kind hearted and caring and is good at responding to calls for help. His

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friendliness and sense of humour are lovely assets. Kerry makes every effort to attend circuit staff and leadership meetings in order to get to know people and the context in which they minister and consequently has become someone who is both approachable and trusted.

The Synod recommends to the Conference that the Revd Kerry Tankard is appointed to serve as Chair for the Yorkshire West District for a further period of five years from September 2025.

The Revd Novette Headley

Novette Headley has served as Chair for the Birmingham District since 2022. The Birmingham Synod recommends that the Revd Novette Headley should be invited to serve for a further year from September 2025 either as one of two joint chairs for the first year of the new West Midlands District or as chair of the Birmingham District, subject to the Conference's decisions concerning the proposals for a new West Midlands District.

Novette's ministry is valued for her ability to listen, her calm wisdom and her nurturing and encouraging leadership. The Synod believes that Novette would bring continuity and strong pastoral leadership at a time of change and potential upheaval.

The Synod recommends to the Conference that the Revd Novette Headley is appointed to serve as Chair for the Birmingham District for a further period of one year from September 2025.

The Revd Mark Slaney

Mark Slaney has served as Chair of the Shetland and Scotland Districts since September 2019. Six months into his appointment, he faced the challenge of COVID and the disruption it brought to all of our lives. In leading services on YouTube, Mark helped Methodists from across the Districts feel connected, and his pastoral concern and sense of humour are widely appreciated.

As we emerged from the COVID restrictions, challenges which were already facing the Districts came more sharply into focus. Mark has not shied away from these, and has encouraged challenging conversations and radical decision making. His ongoing leadership is valued through times of change, not least as the Scotland District move towards combining the current six circuits into a single one, and the Shetland District reduce from two ministers to one. Mark has taken seriously his role as Chair of two Districts, and in doing so has strengthened the links between them.

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Mark is Chair not just in a District, but a Nation, and takes this responsibility seriously. He has particularly taken a lead in developing ecumenical relationships across the Scottish churches. He also recognises the need to represent Scotland (with its different legal system, ecumenical landscape and cultural context) to the Connexion, and the Connexion to Scotland.

The Synods recommend to the Conference that the Revd Mark Slaney is appointed to serve as Chair for the Shetland and Scotland Districts for a further period of four years from 1 September 2025.

The Revd Helen Kirk

Helen Kirk has served as Chair of the Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District since 2019, taking up the role just months before the impact of Covid 19 and the consequent lockdowns. Despite the inevitable isolation across the District, Helen maintained excellent support and communication with lay and ordained colleagues. Helen's leadership of the District has been deeply appreciated, particularly expressed through the relevance and depth of her leading worship, often through the creative use of storytelling. She has demonstrated a clear and down to earth leadership of Synod and the key district committees. Helen has worked hard to strengthen and develop the many positive aspects of the mission and ministry of the District including leading on the appointment of key new posts. As a result of Helen's leadership the District is developing new ways of supporting Circuits in their work and mission. Pastorally Helen has an obvious and genuine concern for people. Her warmth, her ability to listen have been widely appreciated as has her down to earth approach and sense of humour.

Helen offers a pragmatic but deeply spiritual approach to supporting the work of colleagues and she places great value on lay and ordained ministry together. Helen's gifts are greatly valued across the District.

The Synod recommends to the Conference that the Revd Helen Kirk is appointed to serve as Chair for the Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District for a further period of five years from 1 September 2025.