40. Methodist-United Reformed Church Liaison Group

Contact name and details	The Revd Dr David M Chapman Co-Chair of the Methodist-URC Liaison Group The Revd Steven R M Cooper Connexional Ecumenical Officer eo@methodistchurch.org.uk
Resolutions	40/1. The Conference receives the report. 40/2. The Conference welcomes the proposed consultative meeting between District Chairs and Synod Moderators, and in the light of that directs the Secretary of the Conference in consultation with the Liaison Group to report to the 2027 Conference with proposals concerning the vision and shape of future possible collaboration.

The Methodist-URC Liaison Group (MURCLG) meets twice a year to confer and consult on matters of mutual interest, to seek and offer counsel and good practice, and to encourage reciprocity. The group acts as conduit for sharing significant developments and matters of interest from the Conference and the General Assembly. The group is co-chaired – by a Methodist Chair of District (the Revd Dr David Chapman) and URC Synod Moderator (the Revd Geoffrey Clarke) – and its membership is drawn from the two denominations and includes the two denominational Ecumenical Officers (the Revd Steven Cooper and Ms Lindsey Brown), together with ecumenical observers from our Baptist and Anglican partners (Ms Hilary Treavis and the Revd Tim Norwood) and specific representation from Wales and Scotland.

MURCLG has noted with delight the increasing levels of cooperation between the staff of our two denominational Offices now that both are on the same road. Our November 2025 meeting at Methodist Church House coincided with the meeting of the Secretary, President and Vice-President of the Conference with the Moderator of the General Assembly and URC General Secretary and our meeting encouraged them to pursue greater cooperation and sharing. It is the hope of MURCLG that there will be an intentional gathering of Chairs and Moderators, together with the Secretary of the Conference and General Secretary, to discern the potential for further sharing at every level yet without becoming immersed and lost in process and technicalities which many associate with ecumenical endeavour.

Topics discussed and addressed in recent meetings have included:

- Guidelines for Services of Welcome/Induction in MURC LEPs. These have been revised and are commended for use whenever a Presbyter/Minister is welcomed/inducted within a MURC setting.
- Terms of Settlement – the document signed by URC ministers at the commencement of a new ministry and setting out expectations and commitments on the part of minister and congregations. MURCLG has considered a possible additional text to refer to the expectations of the partner denomination where the ministry is in an LEP. Our discussions have also highlighted the blessings and the occasional mismatch in expectations in cases where ministers of other denominations have been Authorised to Serve by the Conference and in particular their relationship with the Circuit and the Superintendent Minister.
- Financial arrangements have also been recognised as a topic on which even well-established LEPs experience difficulty (given the different ways in which the two denominations fund stipends and associated ministerial costs). It is the hope of MURCLG to produce something simple to compare and contrast the two denominations' methods and expectations.

MURCLG continues to champion the places where we worship and serve together and to encourage ever-greater reciprocity.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

40/1. The Conference receives the report.

40/2. The Conference welcomes the proposed consultative meeting between District Chairs and Synod Moderators, and in the light of that directs the Secretary of the Conference in consultation with the Liaison Group to report to the 2027 Conference with proposals concerning the vision and shape of future possible collaboration.