

Ministries Committee Report to the Methodist Council

Contact Name and Details	The Revd Leo Osborn, Chair, Ministries Committee leo.osborn@talk21.com
Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	Decision
Draft Resolutions	<p>40/1. The Council receives the report.</p> <p>40/2. The Council commends the proposed replies to M7, M8, M9 (2011) to the Conference.</p> <p>40/3. The Council commends the proposed replies to Resolution 7/4 and M12 (2011) to the Conference.</p> <p>40/4. The Council commends the proposed reply to M23 (2013) and to the Conference and asks the Law and Polity Committee to bring revisions to SO 965 as may be required.</p> <p>40/5. The Council commends the revised guidance set out in Appendix 1 to the Conference for inclusion in the <i>Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church</i>.</p> <p>40/6. The Council recommends that SO32A0(4) be amended to enable new members to be appointed to the Ministries Committee for an initial period of three years which can be extended for a further period of up to but not exceeding three years and requests that the Law and Polity Committee bring a revised Standing Order to the 2015 Conference.</p>

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To provide an update to the Methodist Council of work undertaken by the Ministries Committee since the 2014 Conference.
Main Points	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction 2. Circuit Based Learning Programme: A Practice-based Pathway for Ministry 3. Local Preachers and Worship Leaders 4. A Framework for Local Ministry Development 5. Venture FX 6. Fresh Expressions 7. Oversight Task Group 8. Discerning Needs and Matching Resources 9. The Theology of Pastoral Care (2011) 10. Partnership between the Centres 11. Memorial M23 (2013) Condition of Manses 12. Length of Appointment to the Ministries Committee 13. Membership of the Committee
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	<i>The Fruitful Field Project</i> report to the 2012 Conference
Consultations	The Faith and Order Committee, the Network Committee, the Diaconal/Presbyteral Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committees, The Stationing Committee, the Ministerial Candidates Selection Committee

Summary of Impact

Standing Orders	The Ministries Committee recommends changes to standing orders in three areas of work, outlined in the proposed resolutions, and requests that the Law and Polity Committee bring recommendations to the 2015 Conference.
Faith and Order	Ongoing conversations on pathway development.
Financial	Forms part of the consolidated budget presented by SRC to the Council.
Personnel	Implications for the work plan of the DMLN.
Wider Connexional	Implications for training and development in circuit, district, regional and connexional contexts.

Ministries Committee Report to the Methodist Council

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report brings the Methodist Council up to date with the work of the Ministries Committee. The Ministries Committee has met on three occasions since the 2014 Conference. A joint meeting also took place in September 2014 between key members of the Ministries Committee, the Stationing Committee, the Faith and Order Committee, and the Network Committee to clarify lines of communication and areas of responsibility and to identify significant areas of joint work to be undertaken in the future.
- 1.2 The following identifies some of the areas emerging from the work of the committee over the past year. It is notable that a number of significant pieces of work have been completed in this period and the committee notes the significant contribution of the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network (DMLN) and the two centres in enabling change at a strategic level and in implementation. The committee is thankful that after a period of significant change and instability, the Methodist Church is now in a position where it is able to experience the benefits of the new approach to learning and development outlined in the *Fruitful Field* report.

2. Circuit Based Learning Programme: A Practice-based Pathway for Ministry

- 2.1 The *Fruitful Field* report identified 'the development of practice-based formational pathways for a number of those preparing for ordained ministry' (para 128.3) as one of the early priorities of the DMLN reflecting 'the desires expressed both by student ministers and also by institutions, colleges and centres for a greater proportion of formal learning activity to take place in local contexts,' (para 102). The Practice Based Formation (PBF) Working Group provided a specification to the January 2015 meeting of the Ministries Committee which addressed complex issues in developing a pathway about the status of students: financial and stationing issues; implications for Standing Orders; the need for clarity in relation to oversight; for accessibility and diversity despite geographical and financial considerations; and the need for rigour in the allocations process. The specification also took account of a range of questions about where and how formation happens, the role of communities and the relationships involved in learning, the interface between local context and the training institution, and the determinants of suitability of both contexts and people.
- 2.2 The working group concluded that one of the reasons why discussion about the pathway had proved problematic was because of the terminology of 'practice based formation' itself. The exclusive use of the word 'practice' in relation to this pathway might imply that practice happens only in a local circuit situation when, in fact, all contexts for formational learning involve acting and reflecting. The proposal accepted by the Ministries Committee adopts the language of a 'Circuit Based Learning Programme (CBLP)' both to avoid confusion and to demonstrate the continuity of this proposal with existing training protocols related to IST (In Service Training) and CCTP (College and Circuit Training Programme). The Ministries Committee believes that this terminology better conveys something of the mutuality and potential for collaborative learning opened up by these arrangements for initial ministerial training than the term 'practice based formation' and the agreed proposals build upon and enhance existing, authorised frameworks for the formation of student ministers. The proposed framework will not require any changes to Standing Orders.

2.3 The pathway specification contains the following key elements:

- **A five-year pilot phase**

The pathway will be introduced as a pilot in September 2015 for an initial period of five years, but with ongoing review. The students' formation and experience will be properly protected. If the experience and outcomes are found to be unsatisfactory, the pathway will be discontinued and students will be transferred on to an alternative pathway at an appropriate point. A mechanism for such adjustment is already available. It is anticipated that the number of students entering the pilot will be small in the first instance (c 4-5 per year).

- **Students on the pathway will be designated as 'student ministers'**

Students will be known under the current designation in Standing Orders ('student minister') throughout their training, this being reflected accordingly in their status, title and dress, with authorisations to preside not being requested or granted. Students will continue to live in their own homes for the duration of their training and there will be no entitlement to a manse.

- **Students will receive a bursary** - during the initial stages of the pilot bursaries will be provided without contribution from receiving circuits. Once the pathway has become established and there is a clearer picture about the potential numbers of students and circuits involved, further discussion will take place with the Ministries and Network Committees and D/PCPOC about the funding of student bursaries and the relative disbursement of costs. It is hoped that the provision of a bursary will enable a more diverse range of students and circuits to access the pathway. It is expected that circuits will pay for travel expenses to and from the circuit and cover all reasonable expenses incurred by the student. As students will receive bursaries, costs related to travel to the Queen's Foundation will be met by the student.

- **The pathway will involve three years of training** - in the first year of the pilot work will need to be undertaken, working with DMLN, Governance Support and Queen's Foundation staff, regional forums and Chairs of District, to identify approved practice bases (the local context in which the individual student will be provided with learning opportunities). The allocation to the first cohort of CBLP will necessarily be provisional and dependent on identifying a geographically proximate circuit within which the student can be placed. This will require further conversations between the student, personal and oversight tutor and the Connexional Allocations Panel acting under the oversight of D/PCPOC during 2015-16. Students allocated provisionally to CBLP to begin in 2015 will train part-time initially, undertaking the first year of the Queen's Connexional Course, followed by two years in full-time training whilst connected to an approved practice base. In subsequent years, as more practice bases are identified, different combinations may be possible with direct entrance on to the pathway and with three years full-time training for some. Flexibility to accommodate different levels of prior theological learning will be helpful.

- **Approved Practice Bases** - the approved practice base will be a circuit not an individual church. Circuits will share the responsibility for student learning and formation with the Queen's Foundation and will normally be able to demonstrate a track record of good practice in supervision and support of learning for a variety of ministries or will, at least, be able to demonstrate how good practice in this area is being developed. Circuits identified as being appropriate practice bases will be able to offer: an active engagement with the development of discipleship; a willingness to be part of a process of developing a learning culture; a vision of what the circuit can offer to the student (and of what the circuit can learn); a willingness to support a student through their learning, recognising that they may well make mistakes, and to bear the consequences; a plurality of approaches to mission and ministry; an upholding of

Methodist practice and discipline, with sound governance, trusteeship and safeguarding; and an understanding of what constitutes good practice and an awareness of where improvement or change is needed.

- **Supervision** - there will be continuity in the supervision of each individual student with someone fulfilling the role of formal supervisor throughout their training. The supervisor will be from and identified by the relevant circuit, approved by the Connexional Allocations Panel (acting under the oversight of D/PCPOC), and part of the team in which the student is based, allowing for accountability and informed supervision, and modelling an appropriate relationship whilst enhancing the student's learning and experience. The supervisor will be expected to undertake the connexional supervision course at the Queen's Foundation. More work needs to be completed on the inter-relationship between the various kinds of supervision that a student receives, including the relationship with personal and oversight tutors at the Queen's Foundation, to ensure a pattern of supervision that is coherent and consistent. It is noteworthy that the Queen's Foundation has significant experience of doing this in relation to a variety of programmes and denominational partners.
- **Research and review** - it is recognised that a number of reservations have been expressed about practice-based formation. There have been concerns about its pedagogy and accompanying curriculum, about establishing formational communities, safeguarding students' well-being and learning, and sustaining appropriate roles and relationships. At the same time, the Ministries Committee wishes to emphasise the continuity between these proposals and previous patterns of working in partnership with circuits both through CCTP and IST and through various forms of practice based learning developed by a number of learning institutions. The Methodist Church already has considerable experience of practice based learning and the development of CBLP needs to build upon the learning which already exists in this area. With this in mind, a research project is being commissioned to enable the Methodist Church to consider such questions, drawing on learning from past and existing practice-based provision both within and outside the UK, and interrogating work which is already informing the proposed approach. The researchers will also help to evaluate the pilot and assist in ongoing review and reflection. The development of a pilot phase and research project also provides an opportunity to explore other models of partnership with circuits and potentially other forms of practice based learning linked to existing part and full-time pathways.
- **Allocations** - the Connexional Allocations Panel acting under the oversight of D/PCPOC will determine who is to be allocated to the pathway. Further work needs to be completed with the panel to develop a suitable process for determining which students will be part of the pilot.

3. Local Preachers and Worship Leaders

- 3.1 During 2014-15 work has continued on the development of a new programme for the initial training of Local Preachers and Worship Leaders ('Worship: Leading and Preaching'). Draft versions of modules 1-4 are being made available in pilot form in the current connexional year and are being trialled in a number of regions. A joint Reference Group has been appointed by the Ministries Committee and the Faith and Order Committee and the evolution of its way of working holds considerable promise for the continuing partnership between the two committees once work on the initial phase of development has been completed. Considerable work has been completed on the infrastructure of the course including the development of training resources for tutors, work on portfolio assessment and an underpinning Virtual Learning Environment which will also provide a platform for future developments in Methodist online training. Modules 1-4 remain on target for connexional release in 2015-16 with Modules 5-8 being made available in 2016-17. Concerns expressed in several quarters

about the length of training for Worship Leaders have been heard and will be reflected upon further in the light of the experience of the pilot projects.

- 3.2 A number of issues related to the practice of Local Preachers and Worship Leaders have been raised in recent years reflected in a number of memorials to Conference. This has happened in a fairly *ad hoc* way and the DMLN Ministry Development Team will undertake a consultation process with Local Preachers' Meetings and other relevant parties during 2015-16 bringing recommendations to the Ministries Committee in 2016-17. The Ministries Committee notes that a number of Memorials presented to the 2013 Conference require a response and commends the following to the Council, which takes account of the review to be undertaken in 2015-16.

Response to Memorials

M7 (2013) – Local Preachers on Trial

M7 (Glossop 19/21) argues that the title 'Local Preacher on Trial' is outdated and ambiguous and asks the Ministries Committee to consider changing the title to 'Preacher in Training' or 'Student Preacher'. Whilst the suggested titles have merit in making explicit the links to training, the title 'on trial', like the title 'on note', has strong roots in the Methodist tradition. The Ministries Committee recommends, at this stage, that no changes are made to standing orders but that consideration of the appropriate title form part of a consultation process with Local Preachers' Meetings during 2015-16 with recommendations to the Ministries Committee in 2016-17 and, as appropriate, to the Conference of 2017.

M8 (2013) – Responsibilities of Worship Leaders

M8 asks the Ministries Committee to provide guidance relating to the Worship Leader's relationship to the planned presbyter or Local Preacher and to review the membership, agenda and title of the Circuit Local Preachers' Meeting to include Worship Leaders as members of that meeting and to enable them to participate in and vote on appropriate parts of the agenda.

SO 685 reads as follows:

'At each service in which a worship leader shares the person appointed on the circuit plan of preaching appointments shall retain overall responsibility for the act of worship, but shall seek to work collaboratively with the worship leader appointed to share in that service by the Church Council.' (see also SO 681 (1), which draws attention to the role of Worship Leaders in assisting in the leadership of God's people in worship)

The Ministries Committee believes that the current Standing Order is clear in identifying the nature of the working relationship between a Worship Leader and those who retain overall responsibility for an act of worship. The Committee recognises that this is not always the case in practice and recommends that consideration of a Code of Practice form part of a consultation with Local Preachers' Meetings in 2015-16. The Committee notes that in future Worship Leaders and Local Preachers on Trial will share in significant parts of their training together (Modules 1-4 of Worship: Leading and Preaching). The new pathway for Local Preachers and Worship Leaders includes examples of good practice in collaborative working and the Committee encourages Local Preachers' Meetings together with Worship Leaders to make use of the relevant part of these resources.

The Ministries Committee recommends that a consideration of the title and agenda of the Local Preachers' Meeting form part of a consultation process with Local Preachers' Meetings during 2015-16 with recommendations to the Ministries Committee in 2016-17 and, as appropriate, to the Conference of 2017.

M9 (2013) – Length of Appointment of Worship Leaders

M9 notes the three-year appointments of Worship Leaders by Local Churches and asks the Conference to direct the Faith and Order Committee and/or the Discipleship and Ministries Cluster to review this period taking into consideration the lifetime admission of Local Preachers to their office. The Ministries Committee recommends that no changes be made to the current length of appointment of Worship Leaders noting that there is already provision to extend appointments subject to review. In the light of increased expectations related to the initial training of Worship Leaders, the Committee recommends that Circuits pay careful attention to who is appointed to the role of Worship Leader noting that a Worship Leader is someone who regularly takes a leading or co-ordinating role in the conduct of worship. The Ministries Committee also recommends that the possibility of a quinquennial review of Local Preachers be included as part of a consultation process with Local Preachers' Meetings during 2015-16 with recommendations to the Ministries Committee in 2016-17 and, as appropriate, to the Conference of 2017.

4. A Framework for Local Ministry Development

- 4.1 The General Secretary's Report to the 2011 Conference (para 38-42) noted the importance of returning to the issue of local pastoral ministry with 'some rigour and urgency'. Initial discussions within the Ministries Committee indicated that it would not be appropriate to proceed with a form of connexional authorisation for such roles until a wider piece of work regarding ministry in the Methodist Church had been completed by the Faith and Order Committee. In addition, wider consultation indicated that the range of local ministries being exercised across the connexion were diverse and, often by their nature, occasional (i.e. local, time limited and non-transferrable) or, in the case of various paid lay roles, guided by contracts of employment and job descriptions so that it was not clear precisely what office, or range of offices, required connexional authorisation. It was agreed, however, that work should begin on developing appropriate resources for a local ministry framework including core competencies, stories of good practice and signposts to existing courses and resources to provide a connexional framework within which various lay ministries which act as focuses of pastoral care and mission in local churches, circuits or districts might be appropriately supported.
- 4.2 The Ministries Committee at its January 2015 meeting accepted a proposal outlining a connexional framework for Local Ministry Development. Implicit within the proposal is the recognition that a framework for Local Ministry Development is important not just for existing patterns of ministry in the Church, but for future patterns of mission and outreach. It is also the recognition that new patterns of mission and ministry are emerging in the Methodist Church which need to be honoured and supported within a framework of excellence. The new framework seeks to encourage the development of a permissive but accountable culture within which a range of lay ministries which focus elements of the life of a local church might flourish in a way which complements existing structures of authorised lay and ordained ministries and principal officers. Key to the proposal is a structure of voluntary agreements and contracts of employment which support the emergence of such 'occasional' and diverse ministries within a framework of connexional guidelines, learning and development. The framework works on the assumption that current standing orders and connexional practice already contain significant permissions, examples of good practice and guidelines, and necessary checks and balances to enable such a pathway to emerge.
- 4.3 A number of elements were identified by the Ministries Committee as crucial to the emergence of excellence in congregational and pastoral practice in the development of local ministries. The following points are of particular significance:

- The way in which local churches, circuits and districts respond to contexts of pastoral care, fellowship, mission and service in culturally appropriate ways involves processes of mutual, collaborative discernment which are not simply a response to pastoral emergency but a shared prayerful process within which future patterns of ministry and mission can be identified. As a pattern of provision emerges one key foundation will be training in patterns of shared reflection utilising insights from mission consultancy, healthy church initiatives, and peer learning groups.
- The Committee noted the importance of the collaborative character and mutual interdependence of ministry and the need for a local ministry framework to reflect the gifts, partnership and mutual interdependence of all ministries whilst affirming the ministry and distinctive role of those set aside and authorised by the Conference to enable the Church in its ministry and mission. It is key to the development of a framework that job descriptions and volunteer agreements take sufficient account of the various relationships and accountability structures within which an appointment is held and the development of guidelines on good practice related to the development of shared, collaborative models of leadership, accountability, review and oversight. The framework as it emerges will also need to provide guidelines, building on current practice, related to employment and volunteer agreements and develop resources related to the practice of collaborative ministry and the development of ministry teams.
- Diversity of ministries – it is evident that there is a diverse range of local responses to pastoral and missional need which a single nomenclature (eg Local Pastoral Ministry) is not sufficient to describe. The term ‘Local Ministry Development’ is used to describe a framework within which a variety of locally recognised ministries, including those which act as focuses of pastoral leadership in local congregations, can flourish, be properly resourced and appropriately overseen. It should also be recognised that there is a variety of existing local circuit and district practice and provision which needs both to be integrated into any emerging framework and honoured as guidelines and learning resources are developed. It should also be noted that the development of pioneer pathways provides an existing route for ministries which are more sodal (ie not on church premises) in character.
- Core practices – to support such a framework it is essential that a blend of learning resources be identified which support the emergence both of a set of core, underpinning practices and sets of learning opportunities appropriate to particular focuses of ministry. Core practices will, in all cases, include Safeguarding training (Foundation and Leadership modules).
- Services of recognition – each year pastoral visitors and class leaders participate in services of rededication. It is important that local ministries are recognised and supported within the local church and circuit context through annual opportunities to affirm calling and commitment.

4.4 The Ministries Committee accepted an outline scheme which the DMLN will now begin to develop in partnership with others. The proposed Local Ministry Development Framework has four key elements: guidelines; circuit development; core practice and individual learning components; gathering places.

Guidelines:

- A set of guidelines providing an overview of good practice related to the development of local ministry appointments under a voluntary agreement or contract of employment by a local church, circuit or district. The guidelines will provide guidance on reviewing the ministry and mission needs of a local context, setting up an appointment, developing local ministry teams, supporting, supervisory structures and review tools. It is worth noting that some information and examples have already been gathered through the

Local Pastoral Ministry Resource group, the online forum and workshops at the 2013 Conference.

- A set of core competencies for different focuses of ministry providing templates for different job descriptions and person specifications.

Circuit/District Local Ministry Development Programme:

– a set of core modules to include some of the following themes:

- Congregational development and review
- Developing local collaborative ministry
- Mission and evangelism in context
- Good practice in supervision, oversight and mentoring
- The management of volunteers
- Change dynamics
- Managing conflict

Core practice and individual learning components:

- Core practice module – to include the following elements:
 - Calling and vocation (including induction into role)
 - An introduction to theological reflection
 - Pastoral theology and practice (including safeguarding training)
 - Local ministry and mission in a Methodist context

Gathering places:

- It is suggested that Circuit or District wide gathering places be developed to enable peer learning, fellowship and mutual support. A further development could be the nurturing of peer learning groups meeting on a more regular basis across circuit boundaries utilising both a case study approach and connexional resources.

4.5 The Ministries Committee notes the significance of these developments for the wider life of the Methodist Church and will bring further reports to the Methodist Council as this piece of work evolves.

5. Venture FX

5.1 As the Connexional Pioneering Ministries Scheme, *VentureFX* was charged by the Conference to explore how pioneer ministry might best be developed within a Methodist Context. Since 2009 the scheme has established 13 projects around the UK each led by a pioneer and each with the intention of helping non-churched people to become disciples of Jesus, and for contextually relevant forms of church to emerge among them. The scheme intended each project to be supported, in collaboration with local circuits and districts, for two five-year phases. Some of the earlier projects are now entering into the second phase, and are in the process of being reviewed by an external consultant. Early indications suggest that healthy, though usually quite small, Christian communities are being formed in the majority of the projects. All of them comprise people who have no previous connection with church or faith, as well as some whose engagement with church has lapsed. In both cases these people are unlikely to have been able to relate to more conventional forms of church.

- 5.2 The experience to date suggests that the scheme was correct to build on the assumption that forming church communities from scratch among un-churched or de-churched people is an essential but painstakingly slow process. Often it is in the fourth or fifth year of a project that a visible community begins to form and it is likely that in the majority of cases it will take the full ten years to reach a point of maturity and sustainability. The challenge of sustaining funding beyond the first five years has been problematic in a number of cases and, in one instance, caused a project to founder.
- 5.3 The learning and experience emerging from the scheme is being captured and shared by the coordinator of the scheme, the project management group, and the pioneers themselves. Through articles, books, websites, conferences, retreats and in the various governance bodies of the Church, the stories emerging from the projects are being told. In particular, the experience of the scheme has been key in helping to shape the development of Methodist Pioneering Pathways as part of the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network strategic approach to the development of pioneer ministries. The pathways will offer a framework of recognition, support, learning and oversight in which people can respond to God's call to pioneering ministry. In this way *VentureFX* is seeking to fulfil its remit, not only to establish new ecclesial communities through pioneering mission, but also to embed the vision and practice of pioneering mission and ministry within the lifeblood of the Methodist Church.
- 5.4 The learning and experience from *Venture FX* has been fed into the development of Methodist Pioneering Pathways (cf. MC/14/41, Section 5). In 2014-15 pilot projects have been developed in the North East, Yorkshire and Bristol and West Midlands Regions with the pathway being rolled out gradually in other regions throughout 2015-16.

6. Fresh Expressions

- 6.1 The 2007 Conference affirmed and encouraged the priority of developing fresh ways of being church and the various ways in which this priority is being taken forward in the life of the Connexion. The 2009 Conference reaffirmed this for Phase 2 of the Fresh Expressions initiative. A gathering of the Fresh Expressions Partner Forum in 2013 affirmed the commitment to develop and sustain the work into a third phase from April 2014 to 2019. The 2013 Conference (Resolution 42/2) directed the Methodist Council to bring annual reports to the Conference on the development of fresh expressions across the Connexion. This is the annual report for 2015 for recommendation by the Council to the Conference.
- 6.2 The Fresh Expressions Team is committed to developing five focused areas of work which emerge out of the core Fresh Expressions vision and promote effective support for an increasingly diverse group of partners. The vision and areas of work are as follows:

"A Fresh Expression is a form of Church for our changing culture, established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any Church:

- *It will come into being through principles of listening, service, incarnational mission and making disciples*
- *It will have the potential to become a mature expression of church shaped by the gospel and the enduring marks of the church and for its cultural context"*

Five areas of work:

- *Supporting Practitioners* – the team are committed to the development of pioneer communities of learning and practice and the establishment of an effective

coaching/mentoring network both providing training and resources to connect clients to mentors/coaches.

- *Modelling Good Practice* – it is clear that a key way of inspiring vision is through enabling people to encounter the stories of God’s action through the faithful steps of those who have taken holy risks. The team is seeking to identify ‘*Pioneer Centres*’, varied places and contexts around the UK which can offer generous hospitality to others wanting to begin (or grow in) a journey of establishing a *fresh expression of church*. Such places will be expected to pass on their learning in apt and appropriate ways and offer some measure of relational support through a community of mutual learning.
- *Resources for Learning* – the team are gathering together existing resources and developing new ones in a single online resource centre which will be available through the www.freshexpressions.org.uk website. The new provision will enable more flexible delivery and greater accessibility to courses like *Mission Shaped Ministry*.
- *Connecting Geographically* – the team is developing ways of delivering its objectives regionally by identifying small groups of senior practitioners and network leaders across the partner organizations working together in 12-15 regions across the UK. These regional groupings will help coordinate support to pioneers and leaders of fresh expressions in their area, signposting the tools and resources developed by *Fresh Expressions* and others and acting as a key focus for delivery and promotion of the five areas of focus.
- *Networking Strategically* – the team is developing a model of hubs and roundtables which group together around common roles, skills, or interest, to engage strategically with the fresh expressions vision within a variety of spheres. The hubs themselves will have different personalities, reflecting the context and culture they represent, but will all share in a desire to be strategic, and reproduce themselves. A number of ‘partner’ hubs will develop within each denomination, as well as specialist hubs that take the vision of roundtables a stage further (eg rural, young adults, youth, young families, mission communities, local resource churches).

6.3 Although the five areas of focus are the main UK catalysts for the coming years there is a growing contribution to Fresh Expressions through international partnerships in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands and the USA. The British Board recently celebrated the approval of the South African Fresh Expressions Partnership to host the 2015 International Conference.

6.4 This is the sixth and final year in post for the current Connexional Missioner, Revd Stephen Lindridge, and the Ministries Committee wishes to thank Stephen for his contribution to Fresh Expressions in the life of the Methodist Church. There have been some significant developments in this period including a growth in the confidence of many individuals and communities through participation in fresh expressions of church. The last five years have re-ignited everyday conversations about what it is to be the church in a relevant way (focused around the four marks of Church: One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic) and Fresh Expressions continues to provoke good theological and ecclesiological questions for the whole ‘mixed economy’ of church life. The Methodist Church’s commitment to working ecumenically has been strengthened through the partnership in Fresh Expressions, especially with our covenant partner the Church of England, and the partnership has enabled a broader and deeper, missional, functional ecumenism to emerge.

6.5 The Methodist Council and Fresh Expressions Board appointed the Revd. Graham Horsley as the Connexional Missioner from September 2015. The appointment is for five years and we seek God’s rich blessing for Graham as he begins this new phase of ministry.

6.6 An interim report responding to Notice of Motion 103 is presented in a separate report to the Methodist Council and details the extensive work taking place in grass root Methodist fresh expressions. The 2013 Statistics for Mission demonstrated a continuing rise in new initiatives with a further 355 fresh expressions of church being initiated. The current activity across the Connexion recognises more than two thousand places, engaging almost one hundred thousand people, most of whom had no previous connection with the Methodist Church.

7. Oversight Task Group

7.1 The Oversight Task Group (OTG) was established by the Ministries Committee to bring together the processes for the selection and oversight of candidates for two orders of ministry. The Ministries Committee agreed a brief for the task group including:

- The integration of DCPOC and PCPOC into MCPOC;
- A review of candidating and allocations processes;
- A review of competencies for the selection of candidates for ordained ministry;
- A review of oversight processes and procedures for student ministers and probationers including the designation and role of Oversight Tutors;
- Recommendations concerning Reception into Full Connexion, Ordination and (for deacons) membership of the Diaconal Order;
- Arrangements for services of testimony and ordination retreats;
- Criteria for probationer appointments.

7.2 The work of the OTG has resulted in the modification and clarification of existing guidelines and, as appropriate, recommendations for changes to policy or standing orders will be brought to the Conference via the Methodist Council over the next few years as the OTG completes its tasks.

7.3 Changes to Standing Orders - a major piece of work has resulted from the decision (reported to the 2014 Conference Agenda item 45) to bring together the Presbyteral Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee (PCPOC) and the Diaconal Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee (DCPOC). The Ministries Committee recommends the establishment of a single Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee (MCPOC) from September 2015 and requests that the Law and Polity Committee work with the OTG to bring proposals to the 2015 Conference amending existing standing orders as required and outlining the constitution of the committee.

8. Discerning Needs and Matching Resources

8.1 The Stationing Committee report to the 2014 Conference identified a number of challenges faced by the Methodist Church regarding the numbers of ministers and stations. A paper produced for the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC/14/43 – ‘Ordained Ministry – Projections’) identified the need for further work in this area.

8.2 The Ministries Committee has commissioned a piece of work discerning needs and projecting the ministry resources the Methodist Church will need in the future building upon existing work by the Stationing Committee on stationing projections which take into account predictions on normal/early or later retirement, resignations and the number of new probationers. Initially this work will employ a purely statistical approach looking at the number of presbyters and deacons, churches and membership of the church and identifying the needs of the Church for the next 2-3 years. Once this initial piece of work has been completed the committee will reflect upon how the model might be developed further to

support the Methodist Church in identifying needs and matching resources in the medium to long term.

9. The Theology of Pastoral Care (2011)

- 9.1 The 2011 Conference received Part 2 of the Faith and Order Committee Report, *the Theology of Pastoral Care* and directed ‘... the Ministries Committee in consultation with the Faith and Order Committee and the Law and Polity Committee to consider the recommendations for further work and the practical outworking of this Statement in paragraph 31 of the Statement’ (Resolution 7/4). At the same conference the reply to memorial M12 asked the Ministries Committee to report on progress related to the development of support and resources in supervision for all involved in ministry in the Methodist Church, especially presbyters and deacons. The Ministries Committee commends the following reply to the 2015 Conference.
- 9.2 The Ministries Committee notes that work on the development of appropriate support and supervisory mechanisms is a standard part of initial ministerial training. Supervision training on a connexionally accredited course is now mandatory for all Superintendents in circuits receiving probationers. From September 2015 this training will be centred and focused at the Queen’s Foundation, enabling the connexion to focus its resources and develop practice in this area through a clearly defined route. It should be noted that all DMLN officers with a ministry development specialism have now undertaken the Queen’s course. Special mention should also be made of the work and expertise of Wesley House, Cambridge and the Wesley Study Centre, Durham, in the development of work in this area.
- 9.3 The term ‘supervision’ continues to be used in a variety of ways but the DMLN Ministry Development Team has been asked to develop a broad understanding of how the term might be applied specifically to Methodist contexts. The importance of supervision has also been noted in wider discussions, eg in relation to the development of various forms of local ministry. In 2015-16, the DMLN plans to distil learning from the past few years and to identify ways in which appropriate training and support can be offered within regions by DMLN Officers and networks and connexionally through the Queen’s Foundation.
- 9.4 There is still significant work to do in relation to these issues but the question of supervision practice is now embedded as a significant strategic objective within the work of the DMLN, and will be kept under review as the future unfolds.

10. Partnership between the Centres

- 10.1 The Ministries Committee was asked to support the Network Development Group (a group comprised of the Head of the Discipleship and Ministries Cluster, the Directors of the DMLN, the Principals of the Queen’s Foundation and Cliff College, the Director of Methodist Formation at the Queen’s Foundation, the Academic Dean at Cliff College, and two Regional DMLN Co-ordinators), in clarifying the roles of the two centres within the learning network and the ways in which partnership between the centres could be enhanced. An interim report presented to the January 2015 meeting indicated that the two centres will build upon their existing core charisms. However, the Ministries Committee confirmed the recommendation that the delivery of Pre-ordination Training be led by Queen’s in collaboration as appropriate with Cliff College and the DMLN Regions. The Ministries Committee welcomes the appointment of the Revd Kenneth Howcroft as Chair of the Queen’s Foundation Governing Body from 1 September 2015 and the presentation of new terms of reference for the Cliff College Committee to the Methodist Council.

11. Memorial M23 (2013) Condition of Manses

- 11.1 The Ministries Committee was charged with bringing a further reply to M23 (2013) to the Conference at a date no later than 2015. The Ministries Committee presents the following report, and in the light of that, proposes revised guidance (Appendix 1) to replace the current Charter for Incoming Ministers (printed in the guidance section of the *Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church*).
- 11.2 The covenant relationship between the Conference and ministers includes the provision of a manse (as a base for the work of ministry as well as a home), for those in the active work who serve in appoints within the control of the church. For those ministers, the care of the manse and garden is part of their responsibility as Methodist ministers. (The manse includes garden, fences, boundaries, sheds and equipment provided by the circuit.)
- 11.3 The provision and maintenance of a manse requires that there is frequent communication between ministers and those responsible for the manse. This begins following the minister's initial visit to the new appointment, with a letter of understanding which includes a schedule of the work that is intended to be done prior to the minister's arrival in the circuit. The expectation is that the minister would be involved where there are choices to be made about any work to be done on the manse.
- 11.4 If it is felt to be appropriate, the circuit manse steward (or district or connexional manse trustee or their representative) will greet the minister (and family) on their arrival and welcome them into their new home. The steward should visit before the welcome service to share a list of contacts in case of a gas, electric or plumbing emergency. The steward should also inform the minister how to report any repairs which need to be undertaken.
- 11.5 It is the responsibility of the minister to report any work that needs to be done on the manse to the circuit manse stewards (or district or connexional manse trustees) as soon as it becomes apparent. The manse steward is responsible for logging this and drawing up a schedule of work to be done.
- 11.6 Each June or July, there should be a visit to the manse by the circuit manse steward (or district or connexional manse trustee) where a discussion can take place about any work that needs to be done and when such work may be done within a planned maintenance programme (SO 954(i)).
- 11.7 It is the responsibility of the occupants to ensure that the manse is kept clean and presentable. Failure to keep the manse clean and presentable should be reported to the responsible person who will contact the district manses committee. Failure by the circuit to keep the manse in a good repair should be reported by the responsible person to the district manses committee. The district manses committee will act as arbiter in dealing with any matters which cannot be resolved locally.
- 11.8 In the last year of an appointment, there should also be a visit 2 or 3 months before the outgoing minister moves to assess what additional help may be required to ensure that the garden, hedges etc are left tidy and to ensure that there is a smooth removal of all property including anything in the loft. In the event of failure to leave the manse in a reasonable condition, the outgoing minister will be charged for remedial work caused by misuse or damage, professional cleaning, removal of unwanted belongings or garden rubbish.
- 11.9 The Methodist Council is asked to note this additional reply to M23 (2013) and the revised guidance outlined in Appendix 1 and to commend it to the 2015 Conference.

12. Length of Appointment to the Ministries Committee

- 12.1 SO32A0(4) indicates that members of the Ministries Committee are eligible to serve for a period not exceeding four years. It has become clear that continuity of experience is vital to the proper functioning of the committee and that the potential for an extended period of service in some cases would benefit its work. The Ministries Committee therefore recommends that SO32A0(4) be amended to enable new members to be appointed for an initial period of three years which can be extended for a further period of up to but not exceeding three years. The Ministries Committee notes that a revised provision, if accepted, should not apply retrospectively to existing members and requests that the Methodist Council recommend that the Law and Polity Committee bring a revised version of SO32A0(4) to this effect to the 2015 Conference.

13. Membership of the Committee

- 13.1 The Committee wishes to express its gratitude to the retiring members of the Committee, the Revds Anne Brown, (Deputy Chair), Mark Hammond, Jenny Impey and Deacon Sue Culver. The Committee also wishes to congratulate the Revd Helen Cameron as she, subject to the Conference, takes up the role of Assistant Secretary of the Conference.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

- 40/1. The Council receives the report.**
- 40/2. The Council commends the proposed replies to M7, M8, M9 (2011) to the Conference.**
- 40/3. The Council commends the proposed replies to Resolution 7/4 and M12 (2011) to the Conference.**
- 40/4. The Council commends the proposed reply to M23 (2013) and to the Conference and asks the Law and Polity Committee to bring revisions to SO 965 as may be required.**
- 40/5. The Council commends the revised guidance set out in Appendix 1 to the Conference for inclusion in the *Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church*.**
- 40/6. The Council recommends that SO32A0(4) be amended to enable new members to be appointed to the Ministries Committee for an initial period of three years which can be extended for a further period of up to but not exceeding three years and requests that the Law and Polity Committee bring a revised Standing Order to the 2015 Conference.**

Appendix 1: Revised Charter for Outgoing & Incoming Ministers

The Conference of 2000 (Agenda pp 216–218), in response to a Memorial to the Conference of 1999, adopted a proposal that, to encourage good practice and to increase awareness, the following Charter be printed in this volume. It was re-phrased to reflect the inclusive usage of ‘minister’ in 2012.

1. In the study/office outgoing ministers should ensure that incoming ministers can expect to find all the information they need to begin their ministry:
 - complete and up-to-date membership lists and pastoral rolls with a list of changes since 1st November last
 - complete and up-to-date committee lists
 - all files tidied with old material either deposited with the County Records Office or filed neatly and separately
 - the legal formalities about Authorised Persons for marriages completed
 - a list of work currently in hand giving whatever details are needed for them to take up that work
 - a pastoral list of those who are currently ill, recently bereaved or in need of a priority visit
 - a list of diary dates
 - a minimum of outstanding work.

2. In the house the outgoing minister(s) should ensure that:
 - all carpets are clean and vacuumed (the circuit should ensure they are shampooed if necessary)
 - all curtains are cleaned (if dry clean only, the Circuit should bear the cost) and re-hung
 - all interior paintwork is washed down
 - tiled floors are left clean
 - light fittings are clean
 - windows are washed inside
 - all cupboards empty, thoroughly cleaned and washed (inside and out) so that they are usable immediately
 - the cooker is cleaned
 - sinks and any built in appliances (such as fridges, freezers, washing machine, dishwasher) are cleaned
 - bathrooms (floors, tiles, bath/shower, toilets and cupboards) are washed down and cleaned
 - that all domestic refuse has been removed from the premises-and that household bins are emptied (if possible) or left out for collection
 - that any furnishings which are the property of the Circuit are checked so that they can be disposed of (if damaged) or are put back, rearranged and made good
 - no furniture is left behind unless provided by the Circuit or by arrangement with the incoming minister.
 - any personal arrangements for telephone or internet have been discontinued and the manse telephone and broadband connection are ready for the new minister.
 - the gas/electric meters have been read and readings sent to the supplier

The following additional information should be provided:

- the alarm code if present
- details of the broadband provider including wireless password
- details of the final gas/electric readings and a note of the current suppliers

- a note of where to find the water stopcock and the main on/off switch for electricity and gas
 - a current energy performance certificate
 - the latest Health and Safety and Fire Risk assessments
 - the updated manse (property) 'log book' including remedial work carried out etc.
 - information regarding the day and frequency of refuse and recycling collection
 - a list of local doctors and dentists
 - bus/train timetables if appropriate
 - local information (eg shops) if appropriate
3. In the garden ministers can expect to find:
- that all hedges and shrubs have been trimmed or pruned at the appropriate time
 - all lawns cut
 - all beds weeded
 - all garden rubbish removed from the premises
 - all greenhouses and sheds emptied and swept out
 - the garage emptied and swept out – anything left must be in agreement with the Circuit Stewards (eg equipment or tins of paint)
 - that the lawn mower provided by the Circuit, adequate to the needs of the garden, is clean and in working order

Failure of either the Circuit or Occupants to fulfil the responsibilities set out in this Charter:

Failure by the Circuit to keep the manse in a good repair should be reported by the responsible person to the district manses committee who may take action on behalf of the wider Connexion.

Failure to keep the manse clean and presentable should also be reported to the responsible person who will contact the district manses committee.

In the event of failure to leave the manse in a reasonable condition, the Circuit may seek reimbursement from the outgoing minister for remedial work caused by misuse or damage to the manse and the cost of any professional cleaning, removal of unwanted belongings or garden rubbish.

The district manses committee will act as arbiter in dealing with any matters which cannot be resolved locally.