

# Ministries Committee

MC/24/43

Meeting date	13-15 April 2024
Contact Name and Details	Mr Keith Norman, Deputy Chair, Ministries Committee Mrs Karen Stefanyszyn, Acting Co-Chair, Ministries Committee Mr Richard Armiger CMgr FCMI, Head of Ministries & Learning, The Connexional Team
Action Required	Decision
Resolutions	<p>43/1. The Council receives the report.</p> <p>43/2. The Council recommends to the Conference proposals for a new process for assessing probation from September 2025. see Appendix 1. <i>Paragraph 71</i></p> <p>43/3. The Council delegates to the Ministries Committee the responsibility for the appointment of the members of a task group to carry out a full review of the ministerial transfer scheme (including a review of Section 73) to start work in the 2024-2025 connexional year and report to the 2026 Conference. <i>Paragraph 79</i></p> <p>43/4. The Council recommends to the Conference that the existing guidance on Deliverance Ministry continues to be used. <i>Paragraph 85</i></p> <p>43/5. The Council recommends to the Conference changes to Standing Orders 013(11) and 1105(10) as laid out in paragraph 88 of the report, and an additional cross-reference in Standing Order 365(7). <i>Paragraph 88</i></p> <p>43/6. The Council recommends to the Conference that a Working Group be set up on Connexional Economic Justice to continue with work currently being undertaken by both the Mission Committee and the Ministries Committee. <i>Paragraph 91</i></p> <p>43/7. The Council approves the revised Terms of Reference for the Ministries Committee. see Appendix 3. <i>Paragraph 92</i></p>

## Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To bring the Methodist Council up to date with the work of the Ministries Committee.
Main Points	The Learning Institutions; Lay Ministries; Matters relating to Ordained Ministries; Student Matters.

## INTRODUCTION

- 1 The Ministries Committee is charged with responsibility to keep in constant review the life of the Methodist Church as it relates to Ministries, to indicate what changes are necessary or what steps should be taken to make the work of the Church more effective, to review the formational and support needs of those who exercise ministry on behalf of the Church, and to report annually to the Methodist Council. Many of the pieces of work currently being undertaken are interdependent with each other and with previous decisions of the Church, for example the 2020 Conference Report *Changing Patterns of Ministry* continues to shape the work being undertaken on future candidating processes and on the review of how we station ministers. The Ministries Committee pays particular attention to the contexts in which ministry takes place, and has spent time and care considering how global factors have impacted upon ministers in terms of their well-being and the nature of their work.
- 2 At the time of writing this report, the Chair of the Ministries Committee, the Revd Gill Newton, is completing her Presidential Year.
- 3 The Ministries Committee is accountable through the Methodist Council to the Conference for:
  - (i) developing and supporting the processes relating to the oversight, accountability and professional development of those engaged in the ministries and offices of the Church;
  - (ii) developing and supporting programmes for nourishing, equipping and resourcing those engaged in the ministries and offices of the Church;
  - (iii) developing and supporting the Church's structures and resources for learning, training, scholarship, research and development;
  - (iv) in collaboration with other bodies, supporting the development of structures that enable the use of various forms of ministry as resources for mission within Circuits and Districts;
  - (v) overseeing connexional policy regarding its ordained ministries, including that relating to the processes for offering as a candidate, the oversight of students and probationers, and stationing, but without adjudicating on individual cases, which shall remain the task of the bodies appointed to fulfil that responsibility. (SO 32A1(2))To that end the Ministries Committee has met twice since the 2023 Conference on 29 September 2023 and 10-11 February 2024, and will have a further meeting on 14 May 2024.
- 4 The Committee reports on its work in the following sections:
  - The Learning Institutions and Continuing Development in Ministry (CDIM).
  - Lay Ministries
  - Matters relating to Ordained Ministries
  - Student Matters

## THE LEARNING INSTITUTIONS AND CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT IN MINISTRY

- 5 The Committee received annual reports from the Queen's Foundation and Cliff College. Both institutions continue to work intentionally to incorporate the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (JDS) strategy.

### The Queen's Foundation report for 2022-23

6. In its partnership with the Methodist Church in Britain, the Queen's Foundation continues to receive all those candidates accepted by the Methodist Conference for initial ministerial training. In September 2022 Queen's had a total of 51 student ministers. Of these, 32 were full-time and 19 part-time; 7 were student deacons and 44 student presbyters. Among the full-time students were 6 students who were on the Circuit-based Learning Pathway (CBLP). The new cohort for 2023-24 comprised 12 student ministers, six student deacons and six student presbyters; six women and six men; three of Global Majority or UK Minority Ethnic Heritage. It has been exciting to hear the news of the number of people engaging with the Discerning Ordained Vocation process, which could lead to a considerable increase in the number of candidates during 2023-24. It is especially gratifying to hear that students of very different theological persuasions, spiritual traditions and worship practices can 'find a home' and expand their grasp of their own tradition and learn from others who are very different.

7. There are three basic training pathways, between which there is considerable flexibility to respond to the needs of student ministers and the Church. On the full-time pathway, student ministers may move to Birmingham or commute regularly. The part-time pathway, the Queen's Connexional Course (QCC), enables student ministers to engage with initial ministerial training through short periods of residence and online/distance learning. The third pathway is the Circuit-based Learning Pathway (CBLP) which involves student ministers in intensive learning both in the context of Queen's and in a Circuit chosen for this purpose.
8. Most student ministers are studying on accredited programmes from Durham University's Common Awards suite, as part of their overall formational programme. At the beginning of the academic year 2022-23, 32 were working at CertHE or DipHE level in Theology, Ministry and Mission; one was working towards the BA; three were on (or moving towards) a Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma programme; 13 were studying for Masters degrees; two were working at doctoral level. During 2022-23, 10 students were being supported with particular learning needs, or physical health needs, many of them through public DSA (Disabled Students' Allowance) provision. The DSA support for students is one of the main benefits of the Foundation's registration with the Office for Students.
9. The current programme of probation studies at Queen's takes advantage of the larger, gathered cohort of probationers who have trained at Queen's and seeks to build coherently on their initial ministerial training. This includes enabling those who choose and are given permission to do so to continue to completion of a BA or MA with the Common Awards programme (or in a small number of cases a Newman University MA programme). In 2022-23, Queen's worked with 46 probationers on the programme of probation studies designed to build on their pre-ordination training. The provision that Queen's makes for probation studies has been valued by the vast majority of probationers, and the District Probationers' Committees also have confidence that the most helpful route for at least some of the study programme is through Queen's, thereby releasing Districts from a responsibility which some had increasingly struggled to fulfil. In September 2022, an additional 17 former probationers were working on their studies post-ordination. Queen's continues to provide additional support for those writing dissertations or completing other modules beyond probation studies, to help them complete their programme.
10. Queen's welcomed two new full-time academic staff at the end of the academic year 2022-2023, the Director of Research and the Director of the Centre for Discipleship and Theology. The current Principal, Clive Marsh, has indicated that 2023-24 will be his final year in the role and a successor is being sought to begin in September 2024.
11. Queen's continues to work under the provisions of the Partnership Agreement with the Methodist Church and has had regular contact with the Director of Learning for Ministry who continues to attend and contribute to meetings of the Governors at the Queen's Foundation. The Chair of Governors is actively seeking to fill 'skills gaps' within the Governing body as a whole, and efforts to make the Governors a more diverse group are at the fore.
12. Focal points for the work of Queen's have been the development of online and Distance Learning work within the expansion of open learning and opportunities for lay theological education and the development of the work of the Centre for Black Theology. There continue to be a number of challenges for the Centre, and for Queen's in having the Centre located as part of the Foundation's work not least (i) how to forge formal partnerships with Black Majority (usually Pentecostal) churches when the nature of these links may be quite different from those with the Church of England and the Methodist Church, and (ii) doing justice to the wide range of UKME/Global Majority heritage experience represented amongst the staff and students.
13. The Foundation was able to welcome four Rwandan students and one Sri Lankan student for extended stays as part of its Methodist Church-funded Partnership in Theological Education (PiTE) work. One of the remaining students (also from Sri Lanka) on the SALT programme was able to be present at the same time as the PiTE group. All together this added a scale of international interaction in the life of Queen's. In addition to this, a further SALT student from Myanmar completed his doctorate through the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in extraordinary circumstances, undertaking the public defence of his thesis online from a hotel room in Bangkok, whilst being examined by scholars in Myanmar, South Korea, UK, USA, and the Netherlands.

14. The Queen's Foundation was again able to arrange overseas experiences through the MEET (Mutual Exchange and Encounter for Transformation) programme. Linking with the two PiTE partner institutions, it was able to send groups of students and staff both to Rwanda and Sri Lanka. Because the groups were received by people known to Queen's (including, in both places, by current Queen's students) the richness and mutuality of the experience of encounter and exchange was very evident.

## Cliff College: A Global Centre for Evangelism and Missiology report for 2022-23

15. Cliff College is a Methodist evangelical learning community which is rooted in God's Word and Spirit for the purpose of equipping God's people for practical ministry and cutting-edge missional engagement. The education offered at Cliff is theology for the real world – rooted in practice, forged in community, grounded in the authority of Scripture and consistently prompting us to face outwards.
16. The major milestone achieved over the past year has been the launch of the new dual delivery undergraduate programme, the BA Theology and Mission, which replaces the previous two programmes (BA Mission and Ministry and BA Theology and Ministry) which were running simultaneously. After successfully navigating the validation process with the University of Manchester, the new BATM degree was launched in September 2023. Recruitment for the programme was strong, especially in comparison to recent years, and we enrolled 23 students in total (7 FT and 16 PT). Students can study either onsite at Cliff (via the full-time residential programme which also involves them in the College's Methodist Way of Life rhythm, or by residence during teaching weeks) or fully online. Cliff has welcomed its first fully online international student, who is currently training for ministry in the Methodist Church in Uganda and is undertaking his studies in fulfilment of the Church's requirements. In the part-time cohort, the College also welcomed seven students from the Methodist Church in Ireland, at various stages of their journey in formation and pre-ordination training. Alongside other Methodist students from the UK, this means that the undergraduate body has a strong Methodist presence this year, which is encouraging, for both the College, and the wider Methodist family.
17. During this year most of the necessary work has been completed to retire the existing MA in Mission programme and replace it with a new MA Theology and Mission programme, which, like the new undergraduate degree, will be dual delivery (online and onsite). The new programme provides a suite of units that build on the College's heritage and emphasis on mission, as well as serving the priorities of the Methodist Church, given that many of the MA students come to the programme as part of their ongoing learning and development within ministry roles. Alongside core units of Missional Theology and Missional Theology in Practice, students can choose from a selection of options, which include: Bible, Gender and Mission, Majority World Perspectives and Mission, Justice and Mission, Pioneer Ecclesiology and Mission, Methodist and Wesleyan Identity and Mission, and Chaplaincy and Mission. These units are being developed to serve both the priorities of the Methodist Church in Britain, but also to coordinate with the training needs of other churches in the Methodist family. The College has a particular relationship with the European Methodist eAcademy of the UMC, and is working to ensure that English-language students from Europe can complete their studies via the eAcademy using the new online units, thus enriching the experience for all.
18. The doctoral programmes continue to include Methodist students who are researching areas of theology and practice related to mission in the Methodist Church. This year, the College is delighted to have had three successful PhD completions, including a recent one by a Methodist superintendent, who researched the role of Methodist circuits in missional practice and church growth. Ongoing students include research topics such as cross-cultural ministry in the Methodist Church in Britain, and (from the Methodist Church in Ireland) the practice of Methodist pastoral care in the context of historic trauma. The College is about to launch a new doctoral scholarship programme, to enable students to participate in the empirical research the College is undertaking among New Places for New People/Church at the Margins projects. It is hoped that this will support the development of both a body of research into Methodist missional practice, and a cohort of scholars who can resource the thinking of the Church for the future.
19. This year has also been the second year of the Mission and Ministry Development Units, which were specifically designed to serve the needs of local lay-pastors, but are also broadly suitable for preachers, lay workers, and others who are involved in the life and ministry of the Church. Over the past year, units have been delivered in 'Ministry in the Methodist Tradition', 'Pastoral Practice', 'Christian Spirituality', 'Growing in Leadership', and 'Christian Theology in Outline'. This is a key moment in the College's academic delivery, as the 'teach-out' programmes reach their end, and the new programmes, with their new hybrid delivery style, are embedded. While this is an enormous

amount of work, for both administration and faculty, the end result of this intense period will be a much more streamlined and fit-for-purpose suite of programmes that serve the Church's needs, as well as demonstrating innovation and quality in the Higher Education sector. The College will undergo its Institutional and Periodic Review with the University of Manchester, in June 2024.

20. The College continues to invest in the development of its research culture. This has included the development of a regular hybrid research seminar, as a context for faculty, research students and guest scholars to share learning and discuss new developments in knowledge and practice. The addition of a Research Fellow in New Places for New People this year has contributed greatly to the development of this culture at the College, and, as noted above, plans are in place for further development of the postgraduate research community, with a relaunch of a PhD Missiology cohort in September 2024.
21. Whilst not a formal centre of research, the College's key activity in research over this period has been the development of the New Places for New People/Church at the Margins project research. This has been facilitated by the appointment of a new Research Fellow, who is working with the College and the NPNP/CaM steering team in order to ensure that the research is carried out in a timely and effective manner. The College looks forward to the fruit of this research becoming available for the Church, as well as the academy.
22. This year has seen the launch of MCBX, as the Methodist Church's own instance of the TheologyX platform. Courses previously hosted on TheologyX (such as Safeguarding and EDI), have been moved to MCBX. The College has continued to develop the use of TheologyX in the charity and church sector, and we are pleased to have welcomed a number of new partners to the site in the past year, including from the United Methodist Church, as well as the Children's Ministry Network of Churches Together in England (for their Children's and Family Ministry Essentials Training). This is building the community of practitioners who are using the TheologyX platform, and the College is providing a valuable, cost-effective facility for such bodies to develop and delivery online training.
23. Globally, the College's main work with TheologyX over the past year has been supporting the Methodist Church in Sierra Leone in its development of new pathways for local preacher and ordination training. Working closely with the Methodist Church's mission partners in Sierra Leone, a new instance of TheologyX for MCSL has been developed, and good practice and curriculum insights have been shared. This aspect of the College's innovation work offers great potential in our commitment to decolonising our own theological curriculum and platforming diverse voices in our own classrooms.
24. Cliff College continues to support a significant number of partner churches including Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Sierra Leone and to develop work in Argentina with an exciting partnership that will have benefit for our validated students as well as the wider College and Connexion.
25. The College is again grateful for the annual grant it receives from the Methodist Church, which not only supports the ongoing work of the College, but also enables us to support the work of the Connexional Team in many ways. We will continue to work alongside, and strengthen our relationships within the Connexional Team including the Learning Network, to develop a range of opportunities that support the learning needs of the Church in this rapidly changing landscape. The College has sought to be nimble in its response to the needs of the church and will continue to do all it can to enable quality theological education at every level of church life.
26. The College continues to work with the wider Church as much of our work intersects with the work of the Church and the Connexional Team. The key intersection points are as follows:
  - Hosting Methodist committees, conferences and training events, and facilitating in-person and hybrid spaces.
  - Running an annual Festival that connects families and young people with the priorities and charisms of the Methodist Church. The theme for 2023 was 'Eden Restored' – working closely with partners to explore issues around creation, redemption and what it means to 'Build the Kingdom here'.
  - Resourcing the Methodist Church's online learning platform, MCBX, and providing consultancy and training to enable Methodist educators to make effective use of the digital learning space
  - Supporting the Global Relationships team in delivering the Methodist Church's commitment to capacity development in theological education globally with our partner churches and institutions, and training those who participate in the Encounter programmes.

- Providing a Methodist environment for Higher Education where students can undertake an undergraduate degree in theology and mission while living a Methodist way of life.
- Providing opportunities for further learning for Methodist presbyters, deacons and lay leaders, through our MA in Theology and Mission programme, and doctoral studies.
- Undertaking research and scholarship into the practices of mission in Methodism in the UK today, through the New Places for New People research project.
- Delivering the authorised training for the Local Lay-Pastor scheme.
- Hosting the Worship: Leading and Preaching in a year training (as required by the church), and providing library and copyright resources for all local preachers and worship leaders in training.
- Developing scholarship, research and training that explores the priorities that energise our church, like justice, intergenerational ministry, young adult formation, transformational leadership, God at the margins, and evangelism.
- And in all of this, being available for the conversations that the Church is having in various areas of mission and ministry, putting our expertise to work in service of the people called Methodist.

## HE Awards

27. The Committee oversees the HE Awards which are given to Methodists, lay and ordained, seeking to pursue higher degrees in a theological or missiological subject. The disbursement of this annual fund is overseen by a HE Awards Panel, working with the Directors of Learning for Ministry, and Research and Scholarship. The Committee was encouraged and excited by the range of subjects being studied, the passion for thinking and learning theologically and how it might impact the life of the Methodist Church.
28. The Methodist Church currently supports more than 40 Methodists studying on courses for a research degree or taught Masters through the HE Awards. Amongst the students being supported there is a diversity of theological interest, for example Christian leadership, chaplaincy, closing churches, dying well, the inter-testamental period, happiness in Wesley's theology and soteriology, aspects of deliverance ministry, pedagogies for developing theological literacy amongst lay people, a queer theology of holiness, and a re-examination of the trinity situated in science, faith and apologetics. It is always encouraging to speak with the students about their studies and theological interests. Most of them are highly committed and enthusiastic, studying alongside full time work and ministry. There is a deep appreciation for the grants that the Methodist Church gives, and for the support offered through the Director of Research and Scholarship and Director of Learning for Ministry roles.
29. Experience of administering the Awards has highlighted where the criteria and requirements could benefit from some revision. The Ministries Committee agreed to some minor changes in the criteria for the HE Awards and the guidance as set out in a report submitted to the February meeting. The committee will consider whether any guidance can be offered where there is currently discretion. It also noted that there are broader questions about the purpose and breadth of these Awards that merit further reflection.

## Methodist-related Education Institutions

30. The Director of Learning for Ministry has continued to work intentionally with Methodist-related institutions to ensure that the Connexional Team is nurturing and promoting their research programmes and encouraging HE Awards applicants wherever possible at least to consider pursuing their study through one of them.

## LAY MINISTRY

### Local Preachers and Worship Leaders (LPWL)

31. The 2019 Conference (Memorial 25) agreed that the Ministries Committee will receive an annual report on the work of worship leaders and local preachers, and in particular their initial training and ongoing development, which will then be included in the report of the Ministries Committee to the Council, and thus to the Conference.

32. The Ministries Committee received the LPWL Annual Report at its February meeting. The committee encourages and supports local preachers and worship leaders, who have a vital role to play in the regeneration of the life and mission of the Church. The following statistics have been prepared in response to Memorial M25 to the 2019 Conference. As of January 2023 there were 5,145 active local preachers recorded on the connexional database, a decline of 6% from 5,477 the previous year. Of those in training, 280 had a Note to Preach (2022: 375), and there were 456 persons On Trial (2022: 483) as local preachers.
33. Taken alone, these numbers are broadly as expected, and align with the decline in membership and attendance, together with the assumed demographic profile of the local preacher / worship leader population.
34. The number of local preachers who died and were included in the Remembrance Book in 2022 was 255. The list for 2023 is in preparation and will be presented at the 2024 Conference.
35. Sixty-eight portfolios were successfully completed on the Worship: Leading & Preaching course in 2023, compared with 140 the previous year. Of these, seven were from worship leaders (2022: 16), who have successfully completed modules 1-4. Thirty-four were Portfolio LPA (2022: 63) and twenty-eight were Portfolio LPB (2022: 61), indicating completion of LP training. There will be a robust investigation into the decline in the number of portfolios submitted.
36. During the year, 70 new students enrolled for WLP (2022: 54) as worship leaders and 123 (2022: 152) as local preachers. The number of new local preachers admitted during 2023 was 33. This compares with 83 in 2022.
37. The number of new LP admissions varies considerably from year to year, but that for 2023 is around a third of the annual average for the last 10 years and compares with a high of 202 in 2021. Work is required to identify and address any systemic factors affecting this number.
38. The number of new enrolments remains encouraging. In circuits with recent experience of WLP, there is a positive attitude, especially as students work through and complete WLP3 and their contribution to the creativity and consistency of worship is recognised. Our focus in 2024 on building the community of Local Preachers' Secretaries should allow us to communicate good stories from those who have enjoyed learning with WLP.
39. The number of new worship leaders is particularly encouraging. This may reflect the opportunity presented by Local Arrangements for new people to be involved in leading worship. Where the local church provides encouragement, this is often accompanied by a desire to learn. The training and equipping of people to lead worship with creative vision and consistent quality is central to the ethos of WLP.
40. Review and rewriting of training materials taking account of insights and emphases from the Justice, Diversity and Solidarity (JDS) strategy and Equality Diversity Inclusion, Justice-seeking Church and Action for Hope continues.
41. Work has proceeded to provide more course materials in Welsh, in accordance with Conference commitments with the publication of Worship: Foundations in Welsh. Although there are currently no students studying in Welsh, the creation of Wales Synod Cymru may provide an opportunity for Welsh-speakers to study in their heart language and encourage mission in Welsh-speaking communities.
42. Work on provision of training materials in Cantonese to support the growing Cantonese fellowships and the significant numbers coming forward as leaders and preachers is currently on hold. Progress was halted pending provision of a new connexional policy on translations. This is now a critical issue as maintenance of the previous Faith & Worship course, a Chinese translation of which is still in use by Conference permission, is now unsustainable. No Connexional Assessors are now available, and the material is outdated. Work has begun on developing an approach for translation of the Worship Foundations material in Cantonese as a test project as part of the wider connexional policy development. Once the policy has been finalised, consideration of further translation can be assessed.
43. Feedback from students studying with Worship: Leading & Preaching continues to be positive. The following was received from a local preacher who recently completed the course:

... I am delighted that my second portfolio has been accepted. I have enjoyed the course and gained a lot from it. I didn't do too well with exams at school so this type of modular learning, applying theory to practice and plenty of opportunity for research, has suited me very well.

44. We were delighted to report that the first "graduate" of the Armed Forces pathway completed their training during the year and was recognised as a local preacher in December.
45. Comprehensive training for WLP students, tutors and mentors continues. This is largely delivered online, and includes Online Inductions, Study Skills, Introductions for Tutors and Mentors, Further Skills for Tutors and Explore Online (discussion groups for students).
46. A proposal to reimagine the Local Preachers' Meeting as a learning community for all those involved in leading worship is currently under consideration with the Faith and Order Committee. This will include an overhaul of related Standing Orders which hopefully will be brought to Conference in 2025.
47. The Ongoing Learning Hub, which provides a range of resources to promote continuing learning is now available for anyone with a WLP account. A self-registration portal to allow anyone to access the resources was made available during 2024.
48. The Ministries Committee received a separate report on a proposed Circuit Worship Leading and Preaching Forum to take over the responsibilities of the Local Preachers' Meeting, but under revised and simplified Standing Orders. The priorities of Worship, Learning, Support and Accountability will be embedded in new resources and guidelines. The committee welcomed this proposal to review and refresh the processes supporting worship and preaching for changing times, create a learning environment which will be designed to regenerate a community which is supportive, equipping local preachers and worship leaders, broadening the learning community and increasing dialogue and participation. The Ministries Committee approved the direction of travel outlined in the report and referred the proposal to the Faith and Order Committee for its consideration. It directed the Ministries Team to work with the Law and Polity Committee to consider what changes would be required in Standing Orders, and how these changes would be brought to the Conference.

## Local Lay-Pastors

49. Following the adoption of the role of local lay-pastor by the 2022 Conference, the Ministries team with colleagues in the wider team has worked hard to provide guidance to circuits on the Methodist Church Website. The committee will be discussing the impact of the local lay-pastor training pathway being supported or encouraged in their contexts.

## VOCATIONS

### Developing Vocations

50. Following the identification, in 2019-20, of developing vocations as an urgent and important priority for the Methodist Church, a number of pieces of work were undertaken by the member of staff appointed to the Ministries Team, on a fixed term secondment, to lead this area. These included research into barriers around candidating and the subsequent review of candidating, a focus on ministerial wellbeing, The *Love This Calling* campaign, and the development of resources to equip the Methodist people in celebrating vocations and discernment.
51. Over the past year, ongoing work relating to vocations has taken place, including:
  - The first complete cycle of the new candidating process, which includes the vocational discernment element, Explore, open to anybody exploring their calling.
  - Exploring Ordained Ministry/ Inhabiting Diaconal Ministry Days which are for those who feel that they have a calling to ordained ministry.
  - Meetings of the Vocations Community of Practice. These underpin the key approach of embedding a cohesion to developing vocations across the Connexional Team, by ensuring that colleagues who have areas related to vocations in their workplans meet together.
  - Completion of the Line Managers' handbook which has a substantial emphasis on vocation.
  - Delivery of the following programmes in addition to Explore:



- Encounter Programme, a 10-month online course for those seeking to explore their vocations, completed by 21 people in 2023.
- A ten-session Youthscape Essentials course for volunteer youth workers
- Vocations Sunday materials and promotion
- In addition, work is being developed to develop the role of District Vocational Champions as well as a programme for young adults, which will have a strong vocational element.

52. Much of this work is now embedded; this, the planned renewed focus on vocations in the God For All 2025-32 update, subject to Conference approval, and the appointment of the new Director of Ministry Development, who will co-ordinate vocations work, means that it is an appropriate time to review all of the extensive work undertaken on vocations in the past few years. Particular elements to be reviewed from the past year include the Explore programme and the outcomes from the work on the Church's response to the low numbers of British people of global majority heritage offering for ordained and lay ministries, and how this work should be taken forward.
53. Following this review, we will renew and re-develop our connexional vocations strategy to align with both the planned timeframes and overarching aims of the God For All update 2025-32, to continue to develop the vital work of enabling the vocations of the Methodist people, both lay and ordained.

## Discernment Process for Senior Posts

54. Please see elsewhere in the Council agenda for the report on progress with this work and a proposal for 2024-2025 for consideration / approval by the Council.

## Committee on Discernment of Ordained Vocation – previously Candidates' Selection Committee

55. The Ministries Committee notes the huge amount of time, patience and commitment that has been given by many people in implementing and developing the new candidating process through its first cycle. The new members of the committee have brought new skills and broadened the diversity and the number of new candidates exceeded all expectations. The candidating scheme had been designed around an assumed number of 32 candidates. The much higher actual number meant that an additional 48 hour meeting of the Connexional DOV2 Committee had to be set up. 23 candidates attended from 2-4 February, and a further 16 attended from 5-7 February.
56. The Ministries Committee resolved to appoint a researcher (consulting as necessary) to establish and operate a review process of the candidating scheme. This is to assess if it has achieved the original objectives. This research to take place September 2025–July 2026. This researcher will bring a report to the Ministries Committee in September 2026. Oversight for this research will be provided by the Head of Ministries and Learning.
57. The Ministries Committee approved the removal of the honorarium paid to Candidates' Portfolio readers from the 2024-2025 connexional year onwards.

## Implications of the New Candidating Process on Probation

58. Following consultations with MCPOC, the Ministries Committee and the Stationing Committee, it had been agreed that further work will be done on adapting profiles for probationer presbyter appointments and diaconal appointments in order to take note of the fact that not all probationers will have previous experience of preaching, proclaiming and worship leading. An Implementation Group was being set up comprising members of these three committees and members of the Stationing Review Group, to meet after the 2024 Conference.

## Candidating Numbers

59. The Ministries Team is keeping these numbers under regular review. Numbers have shown an increase this year which may be in response to the new candidating scheme.

## Criteria for Selection of Candidates SO 710(5)

60. In March 2023 the Council appointed a small group to finalise the wording of the Criteria for Selection for presentation to the Conference for adoption and publication. Please see elsewhere in the Council agenda for the revised criteria.

## MATTERS RELATING TO ORDAINED MINISTRY

### Stationing Review Group

61. At its May 2023 meeting the committee discussed developments in the stationing of probationers and requested that the notes from its discussions be considered as part of the Stationing Review. The Committee reviewed the draft report of the Stationing Review Group in February 2024. Please see elsewhere in the Council agenda for the report of the Stationing Review Group.

### Candidates and Occupational Health Policy and Assessment Reports

62. As previously reported, all recommended candidates from 2024 onwards will have an Occupational Health assessment and a policy was agreed by members of the Well-being team, the Law and Polity Committee and MCPOC that clearly identifies which adjustments are reasonable for a candidate for ordained ministry to be able to study and to minister. In May 2023 the committee approved the policy, noting that it was the culmination of a long process involving robust work with advice sought from many professionals. Where any adjustments are needed for a candidate, these would be outlined in the assessment. The Ministries Committee approved the processes submitted by MCPOC and directed it to set up a standing sub-committee to apply the policy commencing 2023-2024. Members of that standing sub-committee have since met twice to review the Candidates' Occupational Health Assessment Reports and it has nothing controversial to report.

### Flourishing / Well-being in Ordained Ministry

63. The Committee is pleased to see how much had been implemented by the team on behalf of the Church. In addition to the work outlined below around Voices of Identity and Supervision, the Ministries Team continues to offer courses, as mandated by the Conference, for ministers who are shortly to become supernumerary. As well as this, there is a wider suite of residential reflection spaces for those who are making their first moves in ministry, for those who have been in ministry for 10-12 years (Re-Charge), and for those who have travelled 25+ years in ministry. However, the Ministries Committee is aware that there is more work to do on ministerial wellbeing and the Ministries Team will be working with others across the Connexion to review provision for ministerial wellbeing, to ensure that it meets the needs of ordained ministers in the current Church landscape.

### Voices of Identity

64. The committee notes that this work is not a requirement of the Conference but is an additional piece of work and is self-driven by the group involved, with the aim to prevent isolation among ministers. It has gathered the voices of ministers in specific contexts and situations and learning for the Church. The committee valued and supported this work and agreed that the learning found by the group should be shared more widely. The Committee will continue to be attentive to the places of crossover and intersection with other aspects of its work, in particular that of ministerial wellbeing and the current review of the stationing process. It directed that teams or reviews that operate beyond Ministries: Worship and Vocations be directed to take note of the findings of this work so that the learning is not lost. It also directed the Stationing Review Group to be attentive to the issues raised by the different groups of ministers involved to date in this project.

### Changing Order of Ministry

65. The committee directed that Standing Order 718 be updated in consultation with the Law and Polity Committee to create a standard but flexible process to create opportunities for people to change order at three different stages. The purpose is that they do not have to go back to square one or re-candidate but instead use the existing oversight bodies to use discernment in their particular case, with a focus on why they wish to change.

## Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee (MCPOC)

66. The Committee notes that the majority of students and probationer ministers are demonstrating a joy and fulfilment in their formation and ministry. They have shown astonishing flexibility as the Church continues to adapt following the pandemic and as circuits often find themselves in fragile situations. There are some who have challenges as they travel through these years of formation. MCPOC endeavours to walk with them with a combination of pastoral care and robust oversight, both to support them and to support the Church as a whole. There are challenges when probationers identify issues from their own experience which do not appear to impact the way they carry out their ministry and therefore do not appear on the reports from the District Probationers' Committee. The Law and Polity Committee has been asked to review the way in which MCPOC are able to act, and specifically whether it should only respond when the oversight bodies (the Student Oversight Committee or the District Probationers' Committee) make recommendations.
67. In May 2023 the committee received a paper on Initial Stationing Appointments and Local Specific Contexts about those students who had previously candidated under limited deployability, as the process is transitioning to local and specific contexts. The committee approved the action points as set out in the report. At its February 2024 meeting the Ministries Committee directed that a local or specific context appointment is advocated by a District at the point of candidating but is not guaranteed. If that context is not available, the probationer will be expected to serve in another appointment. It directed that a local appointment is endorsed by a District rather than a local Circuit. It also directed that a second appointment in a local or specific context is not guaranteed.
68. The Committee adopted a definition of a District Chair's 'endorsement' of a local or specific context application. The Committee directed that the language is adopted of 'local or specific context for itinerant ministry' and 'itinerant ministry in a broad range of contexts' as outlined in the paper.
69. The Committee requested that a review of SO 723(3) is carried out by the Ministerial Coordinator and a member of MCPOC in conjunction with the Ministry Development Officer (lay ministries) and the Pioneering and Church Plant officer, consulting as necessary. This is to take account of the changing contexts of ministry and the requirements of the oversight of probation. This review group would be asked to report back to the Ministries Committee in February 2025.
70. The committee noted the work of a small group of MCPOC which had met to review the workload of District Probationers' Secretaries and look at reducing the number of reports required. The group has tried to simplify the process although this may create more work for MCPOC itself.
71. The committee approved the proposals to change the assessing of probation from September 2025, as presented by MCPOC. - see **Appendix 1**.
72. The Ministries Committee has noted MCPOC's ongoing discussions regarding the future patterns of probation and has kept this issue on their agenda and under review throughout the year.
73. Members of the Law and Polity Committee had very helpfully assisted with the redrafting of a revised C2 candidating context form which was approved by the Ministries Committee and was subsequently uploaded to the website with the other DOV2 application forms.
74. There has been a high number of issues for MCPOC to address concerning candidates, students and probationers. Issues have included: changes in personal circumstances, changes in training pathway or probation studies, changes to supervision arrangements, concerns around the impact of itinerancy, length of probation for those in part time appointments, inhabiting the particular order of ministry, challenges in appointments, changes within probation appointments, eligibility issues for candidates, applications for local context appointments for candidates.
75. In February 2024 MCPOC presented a list of appointments to various groups, some of which were already existing and others that have come into being with the candidating scheme. The Ministries Committee approved the appointments relating to the new candidating scheme, as listed on **Appendix 2** to the report, and presents these appointments to the Council.

## Ministers of Other Conferences and Churches (MOCCs)

76. The committee notes that the MOCCs have formed a supportive cohort together and frequently seek each other's counsel. Circuits are enjoying their fresh and varied approaches to their ministries. In May 2023 the committee received a report on the MOCCs covering three areas: discernment, stationing and induction. A message had been sent to Chairs of District and Lay Stationing Representatives to make sure they are aware that the MOCC processes have been partially opened up this year, so that circuits can be encouraged to submit a profile for a MOCC.
77. An induction day was held on zoom for two members each of the circuit leadership teams of those circuits receiving MOCCs. They were encouraged to use the material from that day to help the churches in their circuits to prepare well for the arrival of their new minister. The ministers will each be given a paper copy of the MOCC induction handbook in August. It has been made available electronically to each circuit and to the ministers and is also available on the website. Each year this handbook is developed in the light of the experiences of ministers and circuits.
78. The committee directed that a question on health is added to the home church report on MOCC applicants from 2024-2025 onwards. It directed that no occupational health assessments are carried out for MOCC applicants applying for Recognised and Regarded status. It approved a process for all MOCCs who are appointed to non-circuit roles (and not subject to stationing). It approved a process for all MOCCs who are directly recruited to specific roles in the British Methodist Church. The specific roles in circuit are likely to be Fellowship or Language Groups chaplains which have traditionally been identified by the home church.
79. In February 2024, the Ministries Committee approved that the transfer panels in November 2024 may be held online rather than in person. It affirmed the Faith and Order Committee in the work it is suggesting regarding establishing clearer eligibility criteria (regarding ordination) of ministers wishing to transfer. The Ministries Committee expressed a wish that in future ministers may apply to transfer to serve in the British Methodist Church from overseas only if they are listed as a church with whom the British Methodist Church is in partnership. Where ministers apply from British Churches of other denominations, their eligibility will continue to be assessed by the Ecumenical Officer. The Ministries Committee requested that the Methodist Council set up a multi-disciplinary task group to carry out a full review of the ministerial transfer scheme (including a review of Section 73) to start work in the 2024-2025 connexional year and report to the 2026 Conference.

## Ministerial Status of Ministers of Other Churches

80. In September 2003 the committee received an outline policy from the Revd Kenneth G Howcroft regarding the Ministerial Status of Ministers of Other Churches in which he described how the Methodist Church has been blessed in varying ways through the ministry of those who have been ordained in other communions or are in connexion with another Conference or Uniting Church sharing in ministry with us. The numbers of who are recognised and regarded, authorised or associate each year bears witness to the debt that is owed by the connexion. Sometimes, however, our different understandings and expectations can create complex questions. Problems have arisen concerning ministers ordained in other churches or traditions who are working for or serving in some sort of appointment in the Methodist Church but who are not recognised and regarded, authorised to serve, or granted the status of associate presbyter or deacon. The committee co-opted Mr Howcroft to work with representatives of the Faith and Order Committee to explore further the issues involved in this policy.

## Supervision

81. At its May meeting the committee noted that, after a careful recruitment process, the Supervision Reference Group had approved the appointment of the Revd Dr Nicola Price-Tebbutt in readiness for the scoping work to begin on supervision research. Her specialism is in research methodology and she has strong experience of quantitative and qualitative impact analysis. The research will seek to give a clear picture of where the Methodist Church now stands in terms of offering reflective supervision to those involved in ordained and lay ministry, offering both quantitative and qualitative evidence, before the revised Supervision policy is presented to the 2026 Conference.

82. The committee also received an update on group supervision and accepted an amendment to the proposed timeline suggested in the 2021-26 policy to take a more measured and practical approach in light of our ongoing knowledge and budgetary constraints. A larger pool of people is now available to deliver Group Supervision training.

## Faith and Order Committee Matters

83. The Ministries Committee in February 2024 engaged in discussions around the 2023 Conference Paper 27 regarding Online Church.
84. In February 2024 the committee agreed that the Criteria for the Transfer of Ministers should be updated and asked the Faith and Order Committee to propose that to the Conference.
85. In May 2023 the committee received a year one update on Deliverance Ministry from the Revd Kate Strange (Chair of the Connexional Panel on Deliverance Ministry). In February 2024 the committee received a report from the Faith and Order Committee and agreed to recommend to the Conference that the existing guidance on Deliverance Ministry continues to be used.

## M15 (2023) Discretionary Payments to Circuits during a Minister's Suspension

86. Memorial M15 (2023) asked that Circuits be reimbursed for the cost of a minister's stipend when a minister is suspended during a disciplinary matter, in the same way that they would be if the minister were on long-term sick leave (ie stipend refunded after six months' absence). This request was declined, but the Conference reply noted that it is possible for a Circuit to apply under Standing Order 365(7) for a discretionary payment from the Methodist Church Fund, and that the de facto policy is that this can cover the costs of supplying ministry in the stead of a suspended minister. The reply to the Memorial also noted that this might helpfully be clarified in Standing Orders. The Conference therefore directed the Ministries Committee, in consultation with the Law and Polity Committee, to review and amend the text of SO 365(7) in line with the current de facto policy.
87. The Ministries Committee, in consultation with the Law and Polity Committee, recommends these changes to be made in Standing Orders 013(11) and 1105(10) and then to include an additional cross-reference in Standing Order 365(7).

SO 365(7) states that discretionary payments can be made in a number of circumstances, including "where an application is made under Standing Order 013(11)". SO 013(11) states that, where a minister is suspended under that Standing Order, the Circuit continues to be responsible to pay his or her stipend, provide a manse etc. It then adds that the Circuit may apply for a discretionary payment under Standing Order 365(7).

SO 1105(10) contains a similar provision, although SO 365(7) does not cross-refer to it. SO 1105(9) provides that, in a suspension on complaints and discipline grounds, the Circuit continues to be responsible for providing a stipend and manse until the end of the quarter during which the initial hearing of any charge takes place. Clause 10 provides that the disciplinary committee must direct what stipend and accommodation is to be provided during any continuation of the suspension after that, and the costs will be met from the Methodist Church Fund. Clause 10 then adds that a Circuit may apply for a discretionary payment under Standing Order 365(7), relating to either or both periods.

88. The following amendments to Standing Orders are therefore recommended for clarification. A footnote under SO 365(7) is also advised. In addition, circuits should be informed about their rights when a suspension begins.

### **013 Suspension...**

(11) When a minister or probationer is suspended under this Standing Order the Circuit or other body responsible shall continue to provide his or her stipend and shall also reimburse the minister or probationer for all expenses within Standing Order 801(2) which continue during suspension, until the suspension ceases, and he or she shall for the same period be entitled to continue residing in the manse or other accommodation provided. Any Circuit or other body making any payment or providing any accommodation under this clause may apply for a discretionary payment under Standing Order 365(7), **including for reimbursement of the costs of supplying ministry in place of the suspended minister or probationer.**



### 365 Reimbursements and other Special Payments ...

(7) Payment may also be made out of the fund at the discretion of the council or of any committee or officer to which the council may delegate this discretion:

- (i) to reimburse any person or body ... where an application is made under Standing Order 013(11) **or Standing Order 1105(10)**; or

...

### 1105 Suspension...

(9) When a person within the scope of Standing Order 801(1) is suspended under clause (1) or (3) above, the Circuit or other body responsible for provision of the stipend must continue to provide that stipend and pay all expense allowances which are of a continuing nature (except those for expenses which cease during suspension) until:

- (i) the suspension ceases; or
- (ii) the expiration of the quarter during which the initial hearing of any charge occurs; or
- (iii) the expiration of the quarter during which a complaints team decides not to bring a charge whichever is the earlier. The person suspended is entitled to continue residing in the manse for the same period.

S.O. 801(1) covers circuit ministers, other ministers in the active work and probationers appointed to stations within the control of the church.

(10) When such a person is or may be suspended and a charge has been brought by a complaints team, the discipline committee conducting the initial hearing must direct what payment, if any, by way of stipend or allowances is to be made, and what accommodation, if any, is to be provided, during any period of suspension which may occur after the period covered by clause (9) above. All payments so directed are to be made out of the Methodist Church Fund under Standing Order 365(6), and any Circuit or other body making or providing for any payment or providing any accommodation under clause (9) above or this clause may also apply for a discretionary payment from the fund under Standing Order 365(7), **including for reimbursement of the costs of supplying ministry in place of the suspended minister or probationer.**

## OTHER MATTERS

89. Regarding *With Integrity and Skill* (ref 2008 Conference Report), the ASC drew the committee's attention to the extract from this report in CPD which she identified as requiring updating. Various areas would need attention such as the changed culture regarding safeguarding, the introduction of GDPR, the use of social media and other technologies, and the formalisation of pastoral supervision in the life of the Church (following on from IICSA) that everyone in a pastoral role should be in supervision (the Ministers in Training team is looking at a raft of resources for those in pastoral care). The committee discussed what changes have happened in the Church and the world since 2008 that might need to be taken into account when offering guidance about confidentiality within the Church, and what were the most helpful means of doing this work. The Law and Polity Committee has also requested work in this area which will be taken forward by the ASC.
90. The committee had an animated discussion on concerns and questions about climate change and the care of the planet, how this should affect our work at every practical level and how every individual had a part to play in this issue in order to have hope for the future. The Committee recognised the enormous scale of the commitment within the six year timescale and the struggle that many churches will have in meeting Net Zero criteria.
91. The committee received a verbal report from the Head of Ministries and Learning on Connexional Economic Justice that has arisen from work currently being undertaken by both the Ministries Committee and the Mission Committee. Three significant pieces of current work – The Justice-Seeking Church Strategy, God For All: The Connexional Strategy for Evangelism and Growth Update and Renewal (2025-2032), and the Stationing Review – all independently call for the Church to address more urgently what this tradition of economic justice asks of us practically for such a time as this. These reports identify our nature as a Connexional church and our calling to privilege contexts marked by economic marginalisation – but also acknowledge the reality that our structures do not fully facilitate economic justice within the Church. For example, research indicates that church closures over the past decade have been concentrated in the lowest income areas, and that ministers now disproportionately live and work in the least marginalised areas of the country. Stationing decisions

are currently largely driven by the health of circuit finances.<sup>1</sup> Noticing the timely resonance between the three reports, the Mission Committee and the Ministries Committee, together with The Stationing Review Group, therefore propose that the Council adopt a resolution asking the 2024 Conference to set up a Connexional Economic Justice Working Group (CEJWG) to enable the Conference to confer deliberately on a way forward. The Ministries Committee was unanimously in support of this proposal, recognising the complexity of the work involved and that it would take some considerable time.

92. The committee made some minor revisions to the Terms of Reference which are attached to this report – see **Appendix 3**.
93. The committee expressed its enormous thanks to the Revd Paul Wood and wished him every blessing in his continuing role as Superintendent in the Notting Hill Circuit. It is hard to measure the positive impact he had, working in the Connexional Team both as Director of Ministry Development and as Acting Head of the Ministries Team, always with his finger on the pulse.
94. The committee wishes to note that there is a huge amount of work being undertaken by the Ministries Team and there is a number of pieces of work which are not mentioned here simply because they are not yet completed.

**\*\*\*RESOLUTIONS** (with paragraph references)

**43/1. The Council receives the report.**

**43/2. The Council recommends to the Conference proposals for a new process for assessing probation from September 2025.** see Appendix 1.

*Paragraph 71*

**43/3. The Council delegates to the Ministries Committee the responsibility for the appointment of the members of a task group to carry out a full review of the ministerial transfer scheme (including a review of Section 73) to start work in the 2024-2025 connexional year and report to the 2026 Conference.**

*Paragraph 79*

**43/4. The Council recommends to the Conference that the existing guidance on Deliverance Ministry continues to be used.**

*Paragraph 85*

**43/5. The Council recommends to the Conference changes to Standing Orders 013(11) and 1105(10) as laid out in paragraph 88 of the report, and an additional cross-reference in Standing Order 365(7).**

*Paragraph 88*

**43/6. The Council recommends to the Conference that a Working Group be set up on Connexional Economic Justice to continue with work currently being undertaken by both the Mission Committee and the Ministries Committee.**

*Paragraph 91*

**43/7. The Council approves the revised Terms of Reference for the Ministries Committee.** see Appendix 3.

*Paragraph 92*

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<sup>1</sup> Church Action on Poverty (2023) "Church on the Margins"; Braithwaite (2020) "Struggling, Closed and Closing Churches" Church of England, Church Buildings Council; Hirst (2021) "Being Good Neighbours: Placing Methodist Manses for Ministry" Theology and Ministry 7: 55–74

## Appendix 1

# Assessing Probation – DRAFT Proposals for a New Process from September 2025

MCPOC23/36

<b>Contact name and details</b>	The Revd Dr Claire R Potter, Ministerial Coordinator for Oversight of Ordained Ministries potterc@methodistchurch.org.uk
<b>Meeting</b>	MCPOC 11 December 2023 online

### Introduction

MCPOC at its 26-27 April 2023 meeting received paper MCPOC23-02 “Notes from District Probationers Consultation”. The committee noted the admin burden on DPSs and discussed how the processes might be simplified, and possible changes to the work of DPSs, reducing reports, cutting down duplication etc. There was clearly no simple answer and so MCPOC agreed that two DPSs would be invited to work with members of MCPOC, including the Deputy Warden of MDO, to meet and make recommendations to the December 2023 MCPOC meeting. The group members were as follows:

District Probationers’ Secretaries:

The Revd Ben Clowes, The Revd Andrew Letby

MCPOC Members:

Miss Marion Mear, The Revd Dr Claire Potter, Deacon Ruth Richey, The Revd Caroline Weaver

The group met on 27.07.23 and on 23.10.23 and presents the following proposals for a new process for approval by MCPOC.

### PROPOSED NEW TIMETABLE – FIRST YEAR PROBATIONERS

Element	Date	Notes
ROAC	January	
Reports on 1 <sup>st</sup> year probationers are sent to DPS: P3 Worship P4 Circuit P5 Studies P6 Self-evaluation P7 ROAC and Reflections by Warden	Deadline 30 April	P7 is not a summary of the other reports but is a reflection by the Warden
DPC meets 1 <sup>st</sup> year probationers and produces a report P2 from that meeting	3 <sup>rd</sup> or 4 <sup>th</sup> week of May	
DPS uploads all the P forms to Sharepoint for MCPOC		
MCPOC assesses all reports on 1 <sup>st</sup> year probationers and call any panels if necessary or request additional assessments by ROAC or DPC.	July	
No reports on 1 <sup>st</sup> year probationers are taken to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presbyteral Synod</li> <li>• Conference Diaconal Committee</li> <li>• Presbyteral or Representative Session of Conference</li> </ul>		



## PROPOSED NEW TIMETABLE – SECOND YEAR PROBATIONERS

Element	Date	Notes
ROAC	January	
Reports on 2 <sup>nd</sup> year probationer deacons are sent to Warden: P3 Worship P4 Circuit P5 Studies P6 Self-evaluation	Deadline 31 January	
Reports on all 2 <sup>nd</sup> year probationers are sent to DPS: P3 Worship P4 Circuit P5 Studies P6 Self-evaluation P7 ROAC and reflections by Warden	Deadline 20 February	P7 is not a summary of the other reports but is a reflection by the Warden
DPC meets 2 <sup>nd</sup> year probationers and produces a report P2 from that meeting	1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> week March	
Presbyteral Synods receive report on 2 <sup>nd</sup> year probationer presbyters	3 <sup>rd</sup> or 4 <sup>th</sup> week March	
DPS uploads all the P forms to Sharepoint for MCPOC	By the end of March	
MCPOC assess all reports on 2 <sup>nd</sup> year probationers and call any panels if necessary or request additional assessments by ROAC or DPC.	Last week of April	
Conference Diaconal Committee receives reports on 2 <sup>nd</sup> year probationer deacons	1 <sup>st</sup> week May	
Closed session of Conference Presbyteral Session receives reports on 2 <sup>nd</sup> year probationer presbyters	Last week of June	
Ordinations	End of June / Start of July	

### ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

DPC holds panel interviews with any 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year probationers for whom they have concerns that may need additional attention. These panels can be called on the agreement of the District Chair, DPS and Warden (for diaconal probationers). The panel makes recommendations to the DPC who agree/disagree as individuals by return of email. The recommendations could be a referral to MCPOC, an additional meeting of the whole DPC, or an intervention such as occupational health assessment.

### IMPLICATIONS AND QUESTIONS

1. This reduces the workload for DPSs and DPCs both by spreading the work across the year and by no longer requiring P2 to be a summary report of all the other reports. Also the P2 is completed at the committee rather than expecting the DPS to work on it after the meeting.

2. This will provide a fairer assessment of probationers so they are assessed after 9 months (including Christmas and Easter) rather than after just 3 months. Second year probationers are then assessed after 18 months.
3. This reduces the need for the Warden to summarise the other reports. DPC and MCPOC do need to hear the report from ROAC and the Warden's reflections but do not need another summary of the other reports. However is this a Connexional requirement? Can it be changed?
4. This means that Presbyteral Synods, the Conference Diaconal Committee and the Conference itself will no longer receive any reports on first year probationers. That will need to be checked with the Conference Office.

## RECOMMENDED STRUCTURE AND PROCESS FOR DPCs TO FOLLOW – FROM SEPT 2025 ONWARDS

These are suggestions of a general structure rather than a strict timetable because districts will need to adjust times according to the number of probationers in any one year.

A day preceding the date of the DPC – in person or on zoom		
Time	Session	
10.00-10.15	Group of 3 members of DPC (preferably lay, presbyter, deacon) meet and prepare some possible questions to ask the probationers	
10.15-10.45	Presentation by probationer A	
10.45-11.00	Discussion and writing up report using form P2.3	
11.00-11.30	Presentation by probationer B	
11.30-11.45	Discussion and writing up report using form P2.3	
11.45-12.15	Presentation by probationer C	
12.15-12.30	Discussion and writing up report using form P2.3	
	Forms P2.3 are then sent to the DPS	
On the day of the formal DPC meeting - in person		
Time	Session	
10.00-10.30	Sub groups prepare Chair and DPS prepare	
10.30-11.00	Sub group one meets probationer A	Sub group two meets probationer C
11.00-11.15	Writing up on forms P2.1 and P.2.2	
11.15-11.45	Sub group one meets probationer B	Sub group two meets probationer A
11.45-12.00	Writing up on forms P2.1 and P.2.2	
12.00-12.30	Sub group one meets probationer C	Sub group two meets probationer B
12.30-12.45	Writing up on forms P2.1 and P.2.2	
12.45-13.15	Sub group reports sent to DPS who copies the questions onto P2 full committee form	
13.15-14.00	Lunch	
14.00-14.30	DPC meet and plan orders of questioning in full committee	
14.30-15.15	DPC interview probationer A	
15.15-15.30	Discussion and writing up	
15.30-16.15	DPC interview probationer B	
16.15-16.30	Discussion and writing up	
16.30-17.15	DPC interview probationer C	
17.15-17.30	Discussion and writing up	

## Appendix 2

### Appointments approved by the Ministries Committee February 2024

The **appointments** of the following people were recommended to the Ministries Committee by MCPOC to be confirmed in the various roles related to the DOV2 processes. **New nominations are in red:**

#### Accompanists for Explorers and DOV1 applicants

Mark Attwood D  
Anne Baldwin L  
Alan Coustick P  
Denise Creed D  
Anne Haggarty L  
Donald Ker P  
Kathy Lamb D  
Sue Male P  
Andrew Orton P  
Ann Polson L  
Val Reid P  
Naomi Sharp L  
**Wendy Allen L**  
**Vicci Davidson P**  
**Hazel Forecast P**  
**Jane Fulford L**  
**Sam Hagerman P**  
**Wendy Ince L**  
**Paul Kybird L (convener)**  
**Ann Lett P**  
**Rachel Wood P**  
**Bekkie Wright P**  
**Mmasape Thathane-Tyolweni P**

*An appointment and interview process continues throughout the year as people apply to become accompanists.*

#### DOV1 Retreat Team

Roger Walton P  
Cathy Bird P  
Carys Woodley D  
Mabel Nyazika L  
  
Vincent Jambawo P  
  
Michelle Legumi D  
Jasmine Devadason L  
Tara Goodall L  
Pam Reid L  
Lynne Sylvester-Tonge D  
**Kan Yu P**

*6 from this group will run the retreat(s) in any one year*

**DOV1 Advisory group**

Corinne Brown D  
Alan Eccles L  
Andrew Carter D  
Paul Nzacahayo P  
Rose Westwood P  
Sarah Wickett D  
Sylvia Hart L (convener)  
Sonia Hicks P \*  
Alana Lawrence P  
Rosamunde Page P  
Alison Ransome L \*  
Rachel Starr L \*  
Nutan Suray P \*  
Janet Thomas D \*

*They will operate in 3 teams of 3 members (P, D, L in each team)*

*\*Indicates those recruited in April/May 2023 in response to the higher number of applicants. They have already served on the group so MCPOC appointed them in retrospect.*

**'Where Now' retreat team (for candidates who are not recommended for training)**

Rachel Borgars P  
Clive Timehin L  
Jen Woodfin D

**Candidates' portfolio readers**

George Bailey P  
Malcolm Stevenson L  
Stephen Burgess P  
Neil Harland L  
Sarah Bruce D  
Heather Cooper P  
Jacquie Evans P  
Jane Paine D  
Jane Fulford L

**Ordination retreat team**

Kathryn Stephens P  
Farai Mapamula P  
Ian Worsfold P  
Stuart Earl P

## Appendix 3

### Terms of Reference of the Ministries Committee

Approved by the Methodist Council April 2019 *revised February 2024*

The Ministries Committee will be appointed by the Conference and will meet three times per year, one of those meetings will be a two day residential.

#### Membership

1. In accordance with Standing Order 32A0, the Ministries Committee will consist of no fewer than 12 and no more than 14 persons, including the Secretary of the Conference who shall act as convener, and a chair and a deputy chair of the committee. As far as possible the members of the committee between them represent the interests of:
  - the ordained and lay ministries and offices of the Church, including local preachers and stewards;
  - the ~~Ministerial Candidates Selection Committee~~ **Committee for the Discernment of Ordained Vocation** and the Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee and the Stationing Committee.
2. The committee may invite such other observers or consultants, from within and beyond the Connexional Team, as appropriate.

#### General Responsibilities

3. In accordance with Standing Order 32A1, the Ministries Committee shall report to the Methodist Council to enable the Church to develop and maintain a strategic vision for the use of ordained, accredited, commissioned and informal ministries and offices throughout the Connexion.
4. The committee shall be accountable to the Conference through the council for:
  - 4.1 Developing and supporting the processes relating to the oversight, accountability and professional development of those engaged in the ministries and offices of the Church;
  - 4.2 Developing and supporting programmes for nourishing, equipping and resourcing those engaged in the ministries and offices of the Church;
  - 4.3 Developing and supporting the Church's structures, partnerships and resources for learning, training, quality assurance, scholarship, research and development;
  - 4.4 In collaboration with other bodies, supporting the development of structures that enable the use of various forms of ministry as resources for mission within Circuits and Districts;
  - 4.5 Overseeing connexional policy regarding its ordained ministries, including that relating to the processes for offering as a candidate, the oversight of students and probationers, and stationing, but without adjudicating on individual cases, which shall remain the task of the bodies appointed to fulfil that responsibility.
5. The committee may, in consultation with the Methodist Council, report to the Conference on matters of policy or process requiring the attention of the Conference that have been identified by the committee or by the ~~Ministerial Candidates Selection Committee~~ **Committee for the Discernment of Ordained Vocation**, the Ministerial Candidates and Probationers

Oversight Committee, the Stationing Advisory Committee or the Stationing Committee.

6. The committee shall recommend to the Conference, through the council, selection criteria for adoption under Standing Order 710A and, as required, amendments to those criteria.
7. In accordance with Standing Order 32A2, the committee may convene resource groups and may recommend to the Connexional Team or the Methodist Council the establishment of other relevant bodies and consultations. ~~In particular, the committee receives reports from the Fellowships Subcommittee and the Fresh Expressions Guiding Team.~~
8. The committee appoints the oversight group for Ministers of Other Conferences and Churches (see resolution 27/12, recommendation 5, of the 2017 Conference).
9. The committee reports to the Council on the partnership between the Methodist Church in Britain (MCB) and the Queen's Foundation under an agreement which it will have seen and discussed, including processes of communication, accountability and quality assurance. It will receive an annual report from the Principal and/or Governors of the Queen's Foundation on the academic pathways that it administers and any other matters relating to the partnership agreement and will be advised on policy by the Director of Methodist Formation.
10. The committee keeps in view the relationship between the MCB and Cliff College which will be under an agreement which it will have seen and discussed. It will receive annual reports from the Principal of the college who will advise the committee on matters of policy.
11. The committee shall keep in view the use of resources that are deployed to deliver learning for ministry across the Connexion and particularly encourage the articulation of the work of the Learning Network with that of the learning institutions.
12. ~~The committee will review the work of the Regional Forums (by receiving reports from the Director of Regions) at a time to be agreed by the Ministries Committee.~~ ***The committee shall work closely in collaboration with the Mission Committee and the Resources Committee, ensuring that areas of work are suitably joined up across the committees.***