

Minutes of a meeting of the Methodist Council held on 12-13 October 2020 via video conferencing

Present: The President, the Vice-President and 53 voting members as follows:
Mrs Joanne Anderton, Mrs E Jill Baker, Mr Tim Baker, the Revd Paul H Booth, the Revd Dr Adrian Burdon, Mr David Burton, the Revd Dr Joanne Cox-Darling, the Revd Mark Dunn-Wilson, Mrs Barbara Easton, Mr Carl Fairclough, the Revd Dr Andrew Fox, the Revd Ruth G S Fry, the Revd Ruth M Gee, the Revd Dr Barbara C Glasson, Mr Bala Gnanapragasam, Mr Peter Gregson, the Revd Jeremy H A Hackett, Ms Charlotte Hambly, the Revd Novette S Headley, the Revd Sonia M Hicks, the Revd Beverly Hollings, Ms Bet Holmes, the Revd Dr Jonathan R Hustler, the Revd Carmel Ieraci, the Revd Ermal Kirby, Mr Joseph Lambert, Mrs Heather Lovelady, Mr Andrew Lowe, Professor Clive Marsh (from item 20.4.17), Professor David Matthews, Mrs Val Mayers, Deacon Karen McBride (from item 20.4.11), Mr Alister McClure, Professor Ken Mortimer, Dr Daleep S Mukarji, the Revd Leslie M Newton, Mr Keith Norman, Mrs Helen Norton, the Revd Michael Parker, the Revd Malcolm Peacock, Mr Michael Pryke, Mr Graham Russell, the Revd S Mark Slaney, Ms Sandie Smith, the Revd Kate Strange, the Revd O Mark Street, Mr Doug Swanney, the Revd Timothy A Swindell (from item 20.4.6), the Revd Alison E Walker, Miss Margaret Webber, Mr Richard Wills, the Revd Michaela A Youngson, the Revd Dr Jongikaya Zihle.

Apologies: None

Observers: Mr Ted Awty (connexional treasurer), Ms Jude Levermore (Head of Mission), Ms Jillian Moody (Director of Communications), Ms Phoebe Parkin (Youth President), Mr Peter Pay (the United Reformed Church), the Revd Dr Nicola Price-Tebbutt (Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee), Mr Matthew Tattersall (Director of Finance and Resources), the Revd D Paul Wood (interim Director of the Ministries Team).

In attendance: Ms Jane Bates (Minutes), Ms Sharon Hassanali (Events Coordinator).

Letters: The Council sent a letter of greeting and concern to the Revd R Graham and Mrs Rosamond Carter and a message of encouragement to the Yorkshire West District.

At this first meeting of the connexional year, the Council engaged in an introductory session where it spent some time considering its composition, its role, its ways of working and the business it will be considering during the year.

20.4.1 The Open Letter

The Chair of the Council updated the Council in relation to the 'open letter' which had been widely circulated earlier in the year. The Chair of the Council, along with the Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Conference and the Connexional Secretary and the President and Vice-President of the Conference, met with the authors and had a constructive conversation about its content. The President of the Conference has also been involved with the authors, acting as a listener to the small group.

20.4.2 Membership of the Council [MC/20/83]

The Secretary of the Conference presented MC/20/83.

83/1. *The Council appointed Ms Sandie Smith and the Revd Dr Joanne Cox-Darling as members of the Council for the connexional year 2020/2021.*

20.4.3 Council Objectives 2020/2021 [MC/20/84]

The Connexional Secretary presented MC/20/84, noting that the timeline included within will be subject to change as the work develops during the year.

84/1. *The Council received the report.*

20.4.4 Update on work from the Conference [MC/20/85]

The Connexional Secretary presented MC/20/85.

It was clarified that, in relation to paragraph 4 of the report, there will be consultations with a range of people and groups before a report is brought to the Council in January 2021.

85/1. *The Council received the report.*

20.4.5 The work of the Faith and Order Committee 2020-2021 [MC/20/86]

The Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee presented MC/20/86.

86/1. *The Council received the report.*

86/2. *The Council supported the recommendation of the Faith and Order Committee to the Conference that the reports indicated are deferred.*

20.4.6 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

20.4.7 Nomination of the Assistant Secretary of the Conference [MC/20/87]

The Chair of the Council, who had chaired the nomination panel, presented MC/20/87.

87/1. *In accordance with Standing Orders 116A and 313 the Council agreed to nominate to the Conference the Revd Michaela A Youngson to serve as Assistant Secretary of the Conference for a period of six years, from 1 September 2021.*

20.4.8 Connexional Team update [MC/20/88]

The Connexional Secretary presented MC/20/88.

Some additional updates were offered as follows:

- The Senior Management Group is meeting weekly;
- It has been agreed that an Inclusive Church Implementation Officer will be appointed;
- The Revd Matthew Laferty has begun his appointment as Director of the Methodist Ecumenical Office in Rome;
- Work is continuing to develop the concordat with the United Methodist Church;
- 118 groups have booked already to be part of 3Generate 365;
- The Christmas campaign is being developed, with the title #Godiswithus;
- The Council was asked to remember the situation in Cameroon;
- Staff in Finance and Resources are busy with the year-end process and preparing the accounts;
- Staff in Property continue to work hard to ensure that the advice for managing trustees in the present context is up to date and helpful;
- Statistics for Mission will not require the submission of attendance figures this year.

88/1. *The Council noted the update from the Connexional Team.*

20.4.9 Climate change and fossil fuels [MC/20/89]

A consultation day was held in August to enable members of the Council to hear the background to this issue. Further to that, the Secretary of the Conference presented MC/20/89.

89/1. *The Council supported the request that the Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment (JACEI) recommends that the Central Finance Board fully implements Notice of Motion 2017/109 and disinvests before the 2021 Conference from all oil and gas companies which are not currently aligned with the Paris Agreement target of a global temperature rise well below 2 degrees.*

Resolution 89/2 was therefore not put.

20.4.10 Memorial M6 (2020) Global Climate Emergency [MC/20/90]

The Head of Mission presented MC/20/90.

90/1. The Council received the report.

90/2. The Council directed the Connexional Team to bring a report on studies underway in circuits, districts or among ecumenical partners to inform further consideration of M6 Global Climate Emergency.

20.4.11 Stewardship of property for mission [MC/20/91A and 91B]

The Connexional Secretary presented papers MC/20/91A and MC/20/91B which were discussed in more detail in small groups. The comments will be taken into account as further work is done on the issues identified in the papers and the next iteration of the property strategy is prepared for the January meeting of the Council.

91B/1. The Council received the report.

20.4.12 Report from the Strategy and Resources Committee [MC/20/92]

The chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee, presented MC/20/92.

92/1. The Council received the report.

92/2. The Council directed that the budget for the redevelopment of Camden Town Methodist Church be increased by £300,000 from the Pension Reserve Fund to accommodate Methodist International Centre (MIC)'s expenditure to secure planning consent for the project.

92/3. CONFIDENTIAL RESOLUTION

20.4.13 Oxford Place, Leeds [MC/20/93]

The Connexional Secretary presented MC/20/93.

93/1. The Council received the report.

93/2. The Council instructed the Team to begin negotiations with the Yorkshire West District for the return of the Managing Trusteeship of Oxford Place to the District and for the monies spent on the project to be absorbed within connexional funds.

93/3. The Council delegated oversight of the closure of this project to the Strategy and Resources Committee.

20.4.14 Connexional Central Services Budget 2020/21: revision in the light of COVID-19 [MC/20/94]

The Director of Finance and Resources presented MC/20/94, noting that the District Treasurers have now agreed to the suggested approach to the Assessment. This is a one-year budget, but work is underway to look ahead to future years' budgets.

94/1. Responding to resolution 53/6 of the 2020 Conference, the Council approved the revised budget as presented.

94/2. The Council directed that the costs of the property strategy previously borne by an allocation of £1m from the Connexional Priority Fund should in future be charged to the Fund for Property.

94/3. The Council directed that there should be no change to the previously agreed approach to setting the District Assessment.

20.4.15 Update on review of Self-Accounting Entities [MC/20/95]

The Director of Finance and Resources presented MC/20/95.

95/1. The Council received the report.

20.4.16 Connexional grants update [MC/20/96]

The Head of Mission presented MC/20/96.

96/1. The Council received the report.

96/2. The Council directed that the funding for Methodist Action on Poverty and Justice (MAPJ) be considered separately from the funding for the Connexional Strategy for Evangelism and Growth work on Church at the Margins and that the processes for funding these be uncoupled.

96/3. The Council adopted the changes to the funding streams, outlined in paragraphs 25, 26, 27 of the report, and directed the Law and Polity Committee to draft revisions to the relevant Standing Orders.

20.4.17 Governance: Methodist International Centre and the Wesley Hotel [MC/20/97]

The Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice presented MC/20/97.

97/1. The Council received the report

97/2. The Council amended the current delegation to provide for the Strategy and Resources Committee (instead of the Property Development Committee) to act as managing trustees.

97/3. The Council requested that the Board of MIC Ltd agree to an amendment of the company's Articles of Association to increase the size of the Board to a maximum of seven Directors.

97/4. Subject to the Board agreeing to increase its size, the Council appointed two Directors to the MIC Ltd Board, the nominations being the Revd Tim A Swindell and Mr Doug Swanney.

97/5. The Council supported the proposal to transfer the Wesley property onto the Model Trusts, subject to the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice being fully satisfied as to the legal merits of doing this.

97/6. The Council appointed the Directors of MIC Ltd as follows: Valerie Owen, Laure Duhot, Derek Picot, Stuart Burgess, John Nyota.

20.4.18 Methodist Church House [MC/20/98]

The Connexional Secretary presented MC/20/98, on behalf of the Strategy and Resources Committee and the Property Development Committee.

98/1. The Council received the report.

98/2. The Council directed that the current agreed redevelopment of Methodist Church House be discontinued.

98/3. The Council directed the Property Development Committee to explore the sale of Methodist Church House.

98/4. The Council directed the Strategy and Resources Committee to explore further the options in this paper and to present to the Council further recommendations on the option that best meets the Church's requirements.

20.4.19 Corporate Risk Register [MC/20/99]

The Connexional Secretary presented MC/20/99

The Council noted that an update to the risk management policy will be brought in January following further conversations with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

99/1. The Council adopted the Corporate Risk Register.

20.4.20 Committee Appointments [MC/20/109]

109/1. The Council appointed the committees, trustees, governors, management bodies and representatives as set out.

109/2. Acting on behalf of the Conference under the terms of SO 211(1), the Council appointed Stephen Brian Mansel Roberts as a new Trustee to act jointly with the remaining and continuing Trustees for the Aldershot Methodist Military Trust.

109/3. The Council directed the President to execute a deed of appointment to evidence the appointment of the new Trustee.

109/4. Acting on behalf of the Conference under the terms of SO 211(1) and with effect from January 2021, the Council appointed the Revd Julian M Pursehouse to the Stationing Committee (representing the East Midlands region in place of the Revd Helen D Cameron).

20.4.21 Matters Arising [MC/20/110]

110/1. The Council received the report.

20.4.22 Decisions made by the Council since the last meeting [MC/20/111]

111/1. The Council received the report.

20.4.23 Southlands College – Oversight Committees [MC/20/112]

112/1. The Council received the report.

112/2. The Council appointed the Southlands Liaison Group and the Southlands Methodist Trust as set out in the report.

20.4.24 Delegation under SO 365(7) [MC/20/113]

113/1. The Council delegated its powers as set out in SO 365(7) to the Secretary of the Conference or, in his absence, the Assistant Secretary of the Conference.

20.4.25 London Mission Fund [MC/20/114]

114/1. The Council received the report.

114/2. The Council authorised the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice and the London Committee to approach the Charity Commission for a Cy-près scheme on its behalf.

20.4.26 Methodist Schools Committee – terms of reference [MC/20/115]

115/1. The Council adopted the revised terms of reference for the Methodist Schools Committee as set out.

20.4.27 Connexional Grants Committee annual report [MC/20/116]

116/1. The Council received the report.

20.4.28 Authorisations and Delegations [MC/20/117]

117/1. The Council approved the updated list of authorisations and delegations with effect from 13 October 2020.

20.4.29 Oversight and Trusteeship [MC/20/100]

The Connexional Secretary presented MC/20/100.

100/1. The Council received the report.

20.4.30 Mission Committee [MC/20/101]

The Head of Mission presented MC/20/101.

101/1. The Council received the report.

101/2. The Council adopted the principle of establishing a Mission Committee, as outlined in the report.

101/3. The Council directed the Connexional Team to bring names for a pre-shadow Mission Committee to the next meeting of the Council.

20.4.31 Size of the Conference [MC/20/102]

The Secretary of the Conference presented MC/20/102.

102/1. The Council received the report.

102/2. The Council appointed a working party as follows:

(i) a former President or Vice-President; Mr Dudley J Coates

(ii) the Secretary of the Conference or his designee; the Revd Michaela A Youngson

(iii) a member of the Business Committee; the Revd Stephen J Lindridge

(iv) a member of the Conference Secretariat; Mr Martin Harker

(v) a Synod Secretary; the Revd Rosemarie E G Clarke

20.4.32 District Reviews [MC/20/103]

The Secretary of the Conference presented MC/20/103.

103/1. The Council received the report.

103/2. The Council appointed the District Review Monitoring Group as follows: Mr Mike King (Chair), Ms Jane Allin, the Revds Richard M Andrew, Nigel Cowgill, Loraine N Mellor, Mr Stephen Cooper

20.4.33 The Methodist Church in Wales [MC/20/104]

The Connexional Secretary presented MC/20/104.

104/1. The Council received the report.

104/2. The Council recognised that the Synod Cymru cannot continue in its current form and asked the two Synods to debate the matter and to report to the Council of October 2021 on possible new arrangements to be implemented 2022-24.

104/3. The Council requested the two Synods, in consultation with the District Review Monitoring Group, to make proposals for the continuance of the Welsh language work in Wales and to report to the Council in October 2021 with outline arrangements.

20.4.34 Update report from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee [MC/20/105]

Bala Gnanapragasam presented MC/20/105, which represented the first progress report of the Inclusive Church Implementation Group.

105/1. The Council received the report.

20.4.35 Deliverance Ministry [MC/20/106]

The Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee presented MC/20/106.

106/1. The Council received the report.

106/2. The Council adopted terms of reference for and appointed a joint task group with the Faith and Order Committee in order to bring provisional guidelines and guidance in relation to deliverance ministry: Mrs Gill Dascombe (Chair), Ms Alison Bryan, Ms Sarah Chadwick, the Revd Dr Neil Cockling, the Revd Ruth Gee, the Revd Graham Horsley, the Revd Prof Teddy Kalongo, the Revd Dr Mike Long, the Revd Darren Middleton, the Revd Dr Nicola Price-Tebbutt, the Revd Kate Strange (with Mr Tim Carter, the Revd Dr Leao Neto and the Revd D Paul Wood as consultants to the group).

20.4.36 Trust 22122: former Wall Methodist Church [MC/20/107]

The Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice presented MC/20/107.

107/1. The Council declared that Managing Trusteeship of the bequest monies shall be as outlined in paragraph 4 of the report – namely that the monies be held by the Tynedale Circuit.

Resolution 107/2 was therefore not put.

20.4.37 Trusts 17024 and 714: former Middleton Cheney Methodist Church [MC/20/108]

The Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice presented MC/20/108.

108/1. The Council declared that Trust 17024 should be allocated as per paragraph 3 of the report, and sit with the Banbury Circuit.

Resolution 108/2 was therefore not put.

108/3. The Council declared that Trust 714 should be allocated as per paragraph 5 of the report, with the Fund being put towards the cost of running a Messy Church at Hinton Methodist Church.

Resolution 108/4 was therefore not put.