

## Connexional Team Update

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<b>Status of Paper</b>	Final
<b>Action Required</b>	Note
<b>Resolutions</b>	<p>31/1. The Council receives the report.</p> <p>31/2. The Council approves the policy concerning Regional Learning and Development Forums as set out in paragraphs 15-22 and commends the changes to the Conference.</p> <p>31/3. The Council adopts part 2 of the report and commends it and any necessary amendments to Standing Orders to the Conference.</p>

### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and Aims</b>	This paper offers the Council an update of work undertaken by the Connexional Team since the Council last met in January 2018.
<b>Main Points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work that is going on in the clusters in the Team</li> <li>• Policy concerning Regional Learning and Development Forums</li> <li>• The future of the Senior Leadership Group of the Team</li> </ul>

### Part 1

1. This paper offers the Council an update of work undertaken by the Connexional Team since the Council last met in January 2018.
2. The majority of the work detailed below is set in the context of the ongoing changes being implemented in the Team as a result of the Council decisions on MC/18/2. The Team is evolving towards a new shape and that has meant making some roles redundant. At the time of writing all staff whose posts were being removed had met informally with the Connexional Secretary and those whose line management was moving had met with their line manager or Head of Cluster. Formal 'at risk' processes continue and the Council is asked to continue to hold those affected in their prayers as they discern their future.

### Updates from clusters in the Connexional Team:

#### Discipleship and Ministries

##### Ministry Development

3. At the time of writing plans are well advanced for the move of Ministry Development staff to the Conference Office for 3 April. This will allow for the creation of Ministries: Vocations and Worship grouping of staff.
4. In the past months the Ministry Development team has substantially revised and abbreviated the Guide to Ministry Development Review.
5. The new resources for Local Preachers' Sunday are now available on the Methodist Church website - <http://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/methodist-special-sundays/local->

[preachers-sunday/](#). This was created in response to Notice of Motion 209 from the 2016 Conference.

6. The Church and Community team has produced a new resource called 3Generate Local, which aims to help those working with children and young people to engage with the principles and outcomes of 3Generate in their local context. It also offers ideas and guidance for running a 3Gen Local event in districts, circuits and churches. The 3Generate manifesto was published in January, with a response postcard for local churches and groups to feedback how they will be responding and what action they will be taking. These manifesto resources are available at [www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/3generate/agents-of-change/manifestos-and-resources/](http://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/3generate/agents-of-change/manifestos-and-resources/)
7. In January 2018 the National Methodist Student Weekend was held at Cliff College for the third consecutive year. This was planned and organised by a small group of students, supported by staff in the Church and Community team. 25 students were present representing 10 Universities across Britain.
8. We continue to develop learning around the area of additional needs and creating opportunities for all to participate in the life of the church. This includes a charter for those with additional needs, originating from 3Generate and due to be launched as part of a live streamed one day conference on Additional Needs in September 2018. We are collaborating with Mark Arnold, Additional Needs Ministry Director (Urban Saints) and others in the coming months as plans take shape.
9. The Reimagine Circuits conference toured the Connexion in late February and early March.
10. The Discipleship Development Team continues to be very engaged in matters previously reported to the Council including writing the new *Talking of God* resource and supporting the organisation of the 'To Be a Pilgrim' conference.
11. The team is working with Michael Harvey of the National Weekend of Invitation initiative to promote and support this event which will take place from 15 to 17 June.
12. Work with *Thy Kingdom Come* is progressing well in supporting this initiative in the ten days leading up to Pentecost. Four beacon events will be held in Cornwall, London, Oxford and West Yorkshire.
13. Planning is underway in collaboration with district and regional network teams for two 'Spirituality for Change' forums which will take place under the Reimagine banner in the current connexional year, with the intention that these will be followed by further events in the coming connexional year.
14. Working with the Church of England, we have now brought the revised SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) to the point of publication and are now rolling out the training for head teachers, lead governors and inspectors. The Methodist appendix to the framework has been rewritten with similar coverage but a richer language with which schools and inspectors can articulate schools' distinctively Methodist ethos. The resource which was developed with the Free Church Education Committee, Reforming Christianity, is now more widely available and the Methodist RE resource (published in 2012) will soon be available digitally on the Methodist Schools website.

Learning and Development Forums

15. Following the work of the training review further consideration has been given to the purpose and function of the Regional Learning and Development Fora. These were conceived originally in 2008 and have been through a number of changes since then SO 340 sets out the current, but no longer relevant responsibilities of the for. Following consultation with the Chairs of District agreement has been reached on how these significant Forums in the life of the Church should operate. The detailed work is contained below and the Council is asked to approve revised purposes as the policy that will guide the changes to SO 340.
16. The purpose of a Learning and Development forum is to support circuits in being a place of lifelong learning and sharing, so as to encourage and inspire Methodist people in all aspects of their calling, in worship, caring, service and evangelism in response to God's love that they might live out their discipleship, so that the love of God can be made known.

### **Purpose of the Forum**

17. The purpose of the Learning and Development Fora are:
  - To make best use of the resources available within each District, across the region and connexionally in achieving the aim stated above.
  - To intentionally focus available resources into a priority list for learning and development for the region and each District within the region.
  - To work collaboratively so as to agree and own the regional and District learning and development work plan / training diary
    - Sharing resource across the region.
    - taking into account priorities and dates
    - including annual events, new initiatives and issues raised by Circuits

### **Constitution of the Forum**

18. It is recognised that the constitution of each forum will need to be flexible so as to take into account the nature of and existing structures in the Districts.

### **Membership**

19. As a guide the following is suggested:
  - Chairs of the Districts in within the L&D Region (*core*)
  - Relevant Connexional Team staff serving the Districts (*regional coordinator core, officers desirable*)
  - Persons in paid District roles (eg evangelism enablers, mission enablers) (*desirable*)
  - Any key volunteers in applicable roles at the invitation of District Chairs (*desirable*)
  - A Chair of the forum should be appointed who should be a Chair of one of the Districts.
  - The forum should agree who will facilitate the forum meetings – this will normally be the Learning & Development Coordinator for the region but it may be a Chair of one of the Districts.

### **Forum Meetings**

20. The Forum should aim to meet (although not necessarily in person) three times a year to achieve their purposes as set out above. It is likely that smaller key personnel - ie the Chairs and the Learning & Development Coordinator as line managers of the officers and those in District roles might also wish to meet - at least annually, maybe before or after a full meeting of the forum. It is suggested that each region explores ways of regularly (once a year) engaging with a wider group of people from across the Districts , such as superintendents and lay representatives from every circuit, who can share in the work of learning and development and explore their most pressing concerns.

## **Agenda setting**

21. The agenda will be set collaboratively, by the Forum Chair and facilitator and circulated to members in advance of the meeting.

## **Reports**

22. Each forum should make an annual report at the start of the connexional year through the relevant member of the Connexional Team. Reporting; names and roles of forum members, a summary of the last years learning and development events/initiatives, and any areas of concern in regards to enabling Districts to be places of lifelong learning.

## **Mission and Advocacy**

### Engagement

23. We continue to seek ways of improving dialogue with the Connexion, and recent work has included a survey of electronic communications by the Team and a review of the effectiveness of our e-newsletters.
24. We are further identifying advocates for specific areas of mission in order to target information better: a simple request for 'Inter Faith' enthusiasts to come forward brought over 150 online responses and an occasional newsletter will be put together for this group.
25. More than 60 volunteer transcribers were recruited to work on over 150 letters written in the mid-1700s by 'grassroots' Methodists to Charles Wesley about their conversion experiences; [www.methodistheritage.org.uk/earlymethodistvolume.htm](http://www.methodistheritage.org.uk/earlymethodistvolume.htm). This unique collection is held at John Rylands Library and the work of the volunteers will make it much more accessible. A more detailed account of this project will appear in the Connexion magazine.
26. We were delighted to welcome the Grants team to be a part of Engagement, with effect from mid-March, as part of the realignment of some Team activities.

### Publishing and Communications

27. Recently completed publications include Easter resources for churches, the 2019 Methodist Diary, Heritage News, Our Calling pop-up banners, the 2018/2019 Prayer Handbook, resources for Spring Synods and the next One Mission Matters update.
28. A short 'popular' version of the annual report for 2016-17 has been produced and reviewed by the Finance Sub-Committee. This has been circulated in time for Synods.
29. The next issue of the *connexion* magazine will be out shortly after the Council meets, on the theme of testimony.
30. The Methodist version of prayer and worship resources for the 2018 Thy Kingdom Come global prayer initiative, compiled by the Revd Catherine Dixon, is now available from the Thy Kingdom Come website as is *Waiting in Wonder*, nine readings and reflections using images from the Methodist Modern Art Collection.

31. The new Methodist Church website has proved robust and has been generally well received. New pages have been created on the site for resources on Death and Dying, as requested by the Council. <http://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/life-and-faith/death-and-dying/>

#### Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT)

32. The JPIT Brave New World? Conference took place in Manchester in March, attended by over 300 people, with workshops on intergenerational justice, poverty, politics, peacemaking, combatting hate and more! This was a joint effort by the whole JPIT team.
33. A *Women and the Vote* resource for study and prayer was released, including an introductory essay by Meg Munn, former MP
34. New monthly podcast – *Faith in Politics* – launched, with interviews so far with Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, and Stephen Timms MP. Subscribe via iTunes or Podcast Addict!
35. We made a submission to the Government’s review of gambling, and held a follow up meeting with the Gambling Minister, Tracey Crouch MP. We also responded to the Home Office consultation on the future of the refugee resettlement programme, with input from the Revd David Butterworth who has been responsible for the Methodist Church’s first “community sponsorship” of a Syrian family who are now in Birmingham.
36. The *Conversation Welcome* resource has been relaunched.
37. JPIT planned and delivered a day workshop on the Prevent strategy and its impact on higher education chaplaincy, in response to a resolution at the Methodist Conference last year.

#### World Church Relationships

38. The Revd Dr Stephen Skuce, the new Interim Director of Global Relationships, took up his role at the start of February. In addition to the oversight of the world church relationships team and its work, Stephen will be taking forward changes in various areas, approved and monitored by the Global Relationships Strategic Oversight Sub Committee.
39. Immediate attention was paid to a review of how WCR supports the partner church visits of those appointed to presidential and vice-presidential roles in the church. A more robust risk assessment process for overseas visits has also been developed for SLG consideration.
40. A consultation survey on the future of the Mission Partner programme has been circulated widely; Council members will have had the opportunity to respond to this.
41. Freddy and Dee Takavarasha have started their roles as Mission Partners in Uganda, and Fiona Kendall has begun her appointment with Mediterranean Hope in Rome. Anne Baldwin has been delayed in her move to Sri Lanka due to visa issues.
42. Two placement opportunities have been found for the Global Mission fellows programme run by UMC and applications submitted at the end of February. If successful, Fellows will take up 2 year appointments in London and Birmingham in Sep/Oct 2018.
43. Plans are progressing to create a role located in continental Europe, replacing the former Partnership Coordinator based in London. This is separate from a support role for the European Methodist Council which is also being progressed elsewhere.

44. Plans are also being developed for a People to People group visit to India in 2019.

## **Support Services**

### Finance Office

45. Work has continued on resolving various issues within the payroll section and the patience of treasurers and others across the connexion continues to be much appreciated. Development of staff and in depth analysis of systems have been key themes which are beginning to produce dividends, but there is still much progress to be made in order to provide the required level of service to the Church.
46. The main focus during January and February was preparation of the draft three year connexional central services budget which was scrutinised by both the Finance Sub-Committee and Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) ready for recommendation to the Council. In March attention has turned to production of the half-year executive management accounts, plus preparation for the new Gift Aid season that will coincide with the new tax year in April.
47. In mid-March the core finance database, Access Dimensions/Focalpoint was upgraded for the first time in several years. This enabled us to implement a number of software updates which should improve the experience of users and solve a number of niggling bugs within the system.

### Development and Personnel

48. A significant part of HR&D staff's time during spring is devoted to supporting both the candidating and transfer processes. All of this work is undertaken in close collaboration with colleagues within The Conference Office.
49. After the Council's agreement in January to commence some re-shaping of the Connexional Team, HR&D has been heavily involved in supporting work to design and grade new roles, whilst also commencing formal processes to end others via redundancy. The SRC had previously agreed that an additional HR&D Adviser would be recruited to assist with this for twelve months, so we were very pleased to welcome Natalie to that in early March.
50. The meeting with officials from HMRC regarding its investigation of the entire Church regarding its conformity to statutory minimum pay legislation finally took place in late January. The meeting was positive, with HMRC subsequently requesting large amounts of data regarding the Church's various categories of worker (employees and ministers). All of this was provided to HMRC within the requested timeframe and we now await the next steps.
51. Initial tenders were received for becoming the new occupational health provider, with potential suppliers for the Church's requirements both in Britain and also overseas being interviewed in early March. The procurement process continues, with interim arrangements supporting various processes on behalf of the Conference.

### Facilities and Property

52. The work of the Property Development Committee (PDC) has continued to be supported. After the Council's adoption of the key principles of the strategy in October, the main focus has been on developing the strategy for consideration in April.
53. After the January Council meeting, preparatory work started on establishing a detailed project plan for on the proposed redevelopments of Camden Town Methodist Church. Legal

negotiations regarding the final planning consent have also continued, working with professional advisers and colleagues in the Conference Office and TMCP.

#### Archives and Data Protection

54. Work continues in preparing for the May 2018 implementation of the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which will replace the Data Protection Act and place significantly more responsibility on all organisations to manage data more effectively. A dedicated team is meeting monthly to oversee the work specific to the Connexional Team, which has made great progress with Peter Tidey being seconded to focus on that for six months within the Conference Office. Discussions continue with TMCP regarding guidance for the wider church.

#### Grants Administration

55. The March deadline yielded an unprecedented number of applications for connexional grants – far in excess of the available budget. This means that a number of bodies that applied will be disappointed and also that the grants team and volunteer stream and committee members will all be extremely busy. It is encouraging to see so many innovative ideas and proposals, and unfortunate that the finite pot of money can only stretch so far.

#### Support Services general

56. In response to Memorial M17 (2017), which focused on the requirements for online returns for those churches which do not have property associated with them, a review has taken place. It is noted that property-related questions on the annual returns site are already conditional on whether the society meets in a Methodist-owned property or not. All the questions currently being asked have been reviewed to ensure that they are still required and relevant to trustees. As a result, the number of questions has been reduced for all churches, including for those without any property.
57. A significant amount of work has been undertaken in supporting the Church's response to the triennial valuation of both connexional pension schemes, which will be reflected in the papers before the Council.
58. Support Services as a distinct cluster will cease to exist as part of the Team re-organisation, almost ten years after it was first created.

#### **The Conference Office**

59. Since September, the Connexional Team has been without an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser following Jennifer Crook's move to the Houses of Parliament. Following a recruitment process last month, we are pleased that Mr Bevan Powell will be joining the Conference Office in that role on 3 April. The work of the EDI Committee is found elsewhere in the Council Agenda.
60. 3 April will see other changes in the Conference Office as some members of the Discipleship and Ministries Cluster move to the Conference Office. These will form the core of the Ministries: Vocation and Worship Team whose foci will be on strengthening our relationships with the learning institutions, resourcing excellence in worship, supporting continued development in ministry, and highlighting the importance of fostering vocations to ordained and lay ministries.
61. Those staff will remain on the sixth floor of the building. One group of staff that has moved is the Safeguarding Team, now located on the first floor of Methodist Church House. The team is working hard with the support of a number of District Safeguarding Officers to close the work

on the Past Cases Review by the end of this connexional year; it is a challenging target, but at present we are on track.

62. Work is being undertaken on producing more detailed guidance for local complaints officers to support their role in respect of Part 11 and in response to memorial M10 to the 2017 Conference. The Conference Office has also been working on the response to M32(2016) regarding the use of church buildings by other churches. An opinion from Counsel has been obtained on the ability to amend clause 14(2A) and whether the Model Trusts and Methodist Church Act 1976 require there to be some parameters around use by other Christian churches. It is evident from the Counsel's opinion that there is some significant work to be undertaken by the Law and Polity Committee before policy proposals can be brought to the Council. It is unlikely recommendations can be taken to the 2018 Conference but the Law and Polity Committee shall provide an update to the Conference in its report.

### **\*\*\*RESOLUTIONS**

**31/1. The Council receives the report.**

**31/2. The Council approves the policy concerning Regional Learning and Development Forums as set out in paragraphs 15-22 and commends the changes to the Conference.**

### **Part 2**

#### **The future of the Senior Leadership Group of the Connexional Team**

Since 2008 the senior leadership of the Connexional Team has operated in a number of different modes. The first outworking of the Team Focus process envisaged a clear split between leadership and management, with leadership exercised by the Strategic Leaders and operational management exercised by the Senior Managers. These two groupings met separately, with joint meetings taking place less frequently.

Subsequent reviews led to the 2012 Conference amending SO 304, and establishing a single Senior Leadership Group. The current SO 304 is prescriptive in its definition of the senior leadership group, and includes the Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Conference, the Connexional Secretary and the three cluster heads (reflecting the configuration of the clusters at that time). It does not mention the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice, though SO 116C defines this post as being a 'senior member of the Team'. The Conference further determined that the cluster heads would not be members of the Conference or the Council but would be entitled to attend and speak at both.

The Senior Leadership Group (SLG) was designed to bring leadership and management of the Team closer together again, albeit with a distinction between those who carried additional leadership responsibility (and accountability) by being members of the Council and the Conference and those who were more focused on being senior managers in the Team. The 2012 review further requested that the senior manager roles (ie the cluster heads) should be reconfigured slightly to include some minor changes to make the roles more outward facing as appropriate. Since 2016, the SLG has operated by meeting either as an 'operational' or as a 'strategic' group with some differences in both attendance and chairing of those meetings.

However, ways of working over the last two years has confirmed that the leadership and management of the Team is not the same thing as the leadership of the Church. The Church has a Connexional Leaders' Forum and a number of decision-making bodies which make or recommend strategy and policy to other bodies, with ultimate responsibility resting with the Conference. Therefore, to refer to a 'Senior Leadership Group' which is focused entirely on the management of the Team or supporting those decision making bodies is a misnomer.



The Connexional Team requires a 'senior management team' whose responsibility is to oversee the work of the Team and to contribute to the work of leadership bodies. Such a team needs to have the Heads of Cluster, the Assistant Secretary of the Conference, the Connexional Secretary, the Directors of Finance & Resources and Human Resources present at the table, with the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice when that is appropriate. The group should be chaired by the Connexional Secretary with an open invitation for the Secretary of the Conference to attend whenever s/he wishes. Indeed, it would be important for the group to hear reflections from the Secretary as s/he in turn fulfils his/her role of playing a principal part in (amongst other things) the strategic management of the Church's affairs (see SO 114(1A)). It should also be a group which calls on the skills of the other Directors and Lead Staff in the life of the Team to ensure that decision making is happening with the most relevant people in the room. The Connexional Secretary wishes to be able to utilise the 'Lead Staff' meeting as it is currently constituted to be a place where relevant Team policy decisions are discussed and decided so as to involve more of the senior staff in the Team. An arrangement could be made where various of the Directors and Lead Staff met as part of the Senior Management Team as required. There is no question that the Senior Managers provide leadership to the Team, and this would continue. However, it needs to be very clear that the leadership of the Church is located in the Connexional Leaders' Forum, the Council and the Conference. Clarity on this point enables a greater understanding of the way the Team is accountable through the Secretary of the Conference and the Connexional Secretary via the SRC to the Council as the employing body. Furthermore, Heads of Cluster could be more effectively deployed within those clear lines of accountability if they were to attend meetings such as the SRC, the Council and the Conference as and when the business of such bodies would benefit from their advice and input rather than the current pattern of each post holder being expected to attend every meeting.

It would be for the Secretary of the Conference to meet with her/his direct reports and the Heads of Cluster whenever was required, to discuss particular aspects of work or to contribute towards strategic development as required by the decision-making bodies or the Secretary. It is believed that this arrangement would render the idea of a 'Senior Leadership Group' as defined in SO 304 unnecessary and would clarify that the leadership of the Church lies outside the normal management of the Team but includes a number of the senior management team.

Indicative changes to SO 304 are set out as follows:

- 304 The Connexional Secretaries and the Senior Leadership Management Group of the Connexional Team.** (1) The Connexional Team shall include Connexional Secretaries, appointed to that office, who shall assist the Secretary of the Conference in the execution of his or her overall responsibilities. Under his or her direction they shall have responsibility, together with the other members of the senior leadership management group defined in clause (5) below, for the work of the Team and ensure that it is effectively carried out, in accordance with the Deed of Union, Standing Orders and the directions from time to time of the Methodist Conference and the Methodist Council, and, with the wider senior leadership of the Church, shall support him or her in leading the development of the Church's vision of unity, mission, evangelism and worship. They are authorised when so required to act as his or her representative.
- (2) *[revoked]*
- (3) *[revoked]*
- (4) The number of Connexional Secretaries shall be determined from time to time by the Conference, which may determine that there shall be a single Connexional Secretary.
- (5) The senior leadership management group of the Connexional Team shall consist of the Secretary of the Conference, the assistant secretary of the Conference, the Connexional Secretaries, **the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice and such other**

**members of the Connexional Team as the Strategy and Resources Committee shall approve**  
~~the three senior members of the Connexional Team with overall responsibility, under the Secretary of the Conference, for the work of the Team in the respective areas of:~~

- ~~(i) discipleship and ministries;~~
- ~~(ii) mission and advocacy; and~~
- ~~(iii) support services.~~

**\*\*\*RESOLUTION**

**31/3. The Council adopts part 2 of the report and commends it and any necessary amendments to Standing Orders to the Conference.**