

## Wesley House Cambridge: Further training opportunities

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1. The 2018 Conference received the report of the Methodist Council in response to the recommendations of the Training Review Group (TRG). This mandated the Secretary of the Conference to have conversations with institutions other than the Queen's Foundation and Cliff College about the provision of theological education on behalf of the Methodist Church in Britain.
2. In particular, the TRG had recommended conversations with Wesley House, Cambridge, and the Wesley Study Centre in Durham. The focus of the latter conversation was to be on 'postgraduate studies for ministers and lay people as part of their continuing development'. Other commitments have not permitted time to be found as yet for those conversations.
3. The TRG recommended that an engagement with Wesley House should 'include provision for continuous development for lay and ordained ministers of the Church and placing a small number of student ministers.' The Conference noted the caution of the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) that the small number of students currently in initial ministerial formation makes it unlikely that splitting the cohort would be viable.
4. The Secretary and Assistant Secretary have met with the Chair of Trustees and Principal of Wesley House to discuss potential future collaboration as suggested by the TRG. It was noted that Wesley House plans to operate with three centres: a Centre for Global Wesleyan Theology, a Centre for Ministry Development and Pastoral Supervision, and a Centre for Faith and Public Life. The conversation focused on the second of these as being closest to the area of engagement indicated by the TRG.
5. Wesley House envisages that its Centre for Ministry Development and Pastoral Supervision would provide opportunities for further study by those involved in various ministries in the Church, both lay and ordained. It would also provide expertise in pastoral supervision, building on its recognised excellence in this area.
6. The Secretary and Assistant Secretary were aware that the Ministries Committee recognises that the Church needs provision of programmes in continued development for its ministers, both lay and ordained. There is therefore a level of consonance between the work developing at Wesley House and the needs of the Church.
7. Discussions are ongoing with Wesley House and the SRC is expecting a report at its next meeting (30 April). At that stage there will need to be a recommendation on a strategy for the provision of continuing development for those in ministry and whether a collaboration with Wesley House would be appropriate. The SRC will also need to consider the funding of such work.
8. The Council should be aware that Wesley House is still in the final stages of its process of renovation. It is necessary to complete some building restoration work in order to finalise its teaching and learning space provision. There is some urgency to resolve this issue since the majority of the funding for this restoration work is available until February 2020 but £350K is still required. The SRC will be asked to consider contributing towards this capital expenditure if it wishes to recommend collaboration with Wesley House in the areas of further learning and training as outlined above.

9. It is also relevant for the Council to note that the Global Relationships Strategic Oversight Sub-Committee (GRSOSC) has met with representatives of The Queen's Foundation, Cliff College and Wesley House in order to explore how funding from the World Mission Fund reserves can be used for capacity building of the Church in developing countries through various programmes of study, training and formation provided by these institutions. Consequently, the GRSOSC has recently recommended that £550K over 3 years be granted to Cliff College and that £750K over 6 years be granted to Queen's for such programmes. It also recommended that £1.6M over 7 years be awarded to Wesley House to establish an Institute of Global Wesleyan Theology at the Methodist University in Kenya. This will provide leadership and theological training courses, including 16 PhD studentships, for future leaders of the Church in East Africa. This development as regards Wesley House complements its proposed Centre for Global Wesleyan Theology. The GRSOSC expressed a wish that this grant should be seen as part of a partnership package between Wesley House and the Church if any continuing development work develops as referred to above.
10. The Council is therefore being informed that conversations are being held with Wesley House but that the details of any potential agreement have yet to be scrutinised by the SRC before any recommendations can be made. Likewise the details of any capital and revenue financing also need careful scrutiny before any decisions are taken.
11. The Council should be aware that it may be asked to approve some recommendations before it next meets.

**\*\*\*RESOLUTIONS**

**32/1. The Council receives the report.**

**32/2. The Council directs the Strategy and Resources Committee to undertake detailed scrutiny of any potential partnership with Wesley House Cambridge and to make recommendations to the Council as soon as possible.**