

## Task Group to review the size of the Conference

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| <b>Name and contact details</b> | The Revd Michaela A Youngson, Assistant Secretary of the Conference<br>ASC@methodistchurch.org.uk  |
| <b>Resolutions</b>              | 77/1. The Council receives the report.<br>77/2. The Council approves the Terms of Reference for a Task Group, which will report with recommendations to the Council of January 2022.                   |
| <b>Supporting Documents</b>     | Conference Agenda 2021, Agenda Item 30: Oversight and Trusteeship – see particularly section 6 and Appendix 3.<br>Conference Agenda 2021, Agenda Item 56: Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity |

### Terms of Reference and Membership of the Group

#### Introduction

Having received the report which was made to the Council in March 2021, MC/21/38, the Conference adopted a further resolution, amended by a notice of motion:

The Conference directs that the Council appoints a group to undertake further work to review the constitution of the Conference and its ways of working, and to report with recommendations to the 2022 Conference.

This paper sets out Terms of Reference for a small group to further the work of reviewing the size of the Methodist Conference. This brief report does not reiterate the content of those earlier papers but is based on the considerations therein.

#### Terms of Reference

##### Task Group reviewing the size of the Methodist Conference

1. To do work in light of the Oversight and Trusteeship report to the Conference in 2021 to review the constitution of the Methodist Conference, considering the size that it needs to be to fulfil its responsibilities as a place of conferring, of oversight and as a governing body.
2. To give careful consideration to ensure that there is a balanced representation from the Districts and ex officio members, taking into account the Methodist Church's commitment to inclusion and diversity as articulated in the 2021 Conference report, Justice, Dignity and Solidarity;
3. To consider any possible amendments that shall be required to the Deed of Union, as a consequence of its recommendations;
4. To take into account the issues raised in Annex B to the Council report MC/21/38;
5. To produce a report, with recommendations on the number of members and ways of working, for the Council meeting in January 2022 and a final report for the Conference in 2022.

#### Task Group Membership

Convenor & Chair      Michaela Youngson      Assistant Secretary of the Conference  
Two or Three members of the Council

Nominations for members of the task group are requested from the Council; if possible names will be presented to the Council for appointment. It is helpful if at least one of the Council members on the task group has been a member of the Conference in recent years.

### **Considerations and Ways of Working**

The number of members and the time allowed for the Conference need to ensure that it retain the sense of it being an 'occasion' – the Election of the President and Vice President, the Reception into Full Connexion and the significant acts of worship may be diminished by a greater reduction in numbers. If the Connexional Council comes into being as the trustee body of the Church, then the role of the celebratory events at the Conference can take a greater focus, as the quantity of business might be reduced. Reducing the essential business will also allow for greater conferring on particular matters, even if the number of days meeting is reduced.

The length of sessions might be reduced (and therefore the number of days meeting) and greater participation of members enabled if:

1. The Connexional Council processes work that currently has to be done by the Conference as trustee body;
2. There is an increase in the number of *en bloc* items;
3. Non-emergency Notices of Motion are submitted to a deadline (eg a month prior to the Conference meeting) – emergency NoMs could be brought by members of the Conference at any time during the year and meetings called (a limit of say 3 meetings per year) online, to discuss the matter in hand;
4. Members of the Conference to be active 'all year', meeting online to discuss forthcoming agenda items and, if properly constituted (ie meeting in full), decisions can be made.
5. Members of the Conference opt to be part of conferring groups on particular themes (eg Missions, Ministries, Governance and/or the Our Calling priorities) meeting online.

Retaining a ratio of approximately 25% ex-officio, to 75% district representatives requires the Conference to remain a significant size. It may be possible to reduce the ex-officio categories and numbers within, however a number of these categories represent those things that the Conference has previously deemed to be priorities within its life and the life of the Church.

The Council is therefore asked to approve the Terms of Reference for the Task Group and, in order to offer something of a steer to the Task Group, to reflect on three questions:

1. What is an appropriate size of Conference that would enable us to confer well and to retain a sense of bringing the Church together for significant events in our common life?
2. The present size is constituted with an approximate 25% to 75% ratio of ex-officio to synod representatives. Should that ratio be retained? If not, what might an appropriate balance be?
3. What weight should be given to the advantages of a smaller Conference (eg, financial saving, reduced carbon footprint, a greater number of available venues around the Connexion, a smaller number of representatives for districts to find)?

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

**77/1. The Council receives the report.**

**77/2. The Council approves the Terms of Reference for a Task Group, which will report with recommendations to the Council of January 2022.**

## Appendix 1

### The Constitution of the Conference at Present (SO 100-107, DU 14\*)

| <b>Role</b>                         | <b>Current Number</b> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Presidency*                         | 6                     |
| Secretary of Conference*            | 1                     |
| Chairs of District*                 | 30                    |
| Warden of the Diaconal Order*       | 1                     |
| Irish Methodist Church Reps*        | 4                     |
| UMC Reps                            | 2                     |
| Global Relationships Assoc'*        | 2                     |
| Conference Elected                  | 9                     |
| Youth Assembly                      | 4                     |
| Assistant Secretary of Conference   | 1                     |
| COLCP                               | 1                     |
| Record Secretary                    | 1                     |
| Journal Secretary                   | 1                     |
| Memorials Cttee Convenor            | 1                     |
| Chair of Rep Session Business Cttee | 1                     |
| Methodist Council Chair             | 1                     |
| SRC Chair                           | 1                     |
| Connexional Council Chair           | 0                     |
| Forces Chaplain                     | 1                     |
| Treasurer                           | 1                     |
| Connexional Secretary               | 1                     |
| Mission Partners (serving)          | 2                     |
| EDI                                 | 6                     |
| Secretary of Faith and Order        | 1                     |
| Law and Polity                      | 1                     |
| Stationing Committee                | 1                     |
| MWIB                                | 1                     |
| Synods                              | 224                   |
| Totals                              | 306                   |