

The Constitution of the Conference

MC/22/77

Date of meeting	17-18 October 2022
Contact name and details	The Revd Michaela Youngson, Assistant Secretary of the Conference asc@methodistchurch.org.uk
Action required	Discussion
Resolutions	<p>77/1. The Council receives the report.</p> <p>77/2. The Council directs that a small group be brought together, consisting of five persons, to consider and recommend how the ex-officio proportion of the membership of the Methodist Conference be constituted from 2024 onwards. The group to report back to the spring meeting of the Council.</p> <p>Membership of the Group: ASC (Convenor) Jenny Dyer (Conference Record Secretary) A person nominated by the JDS Committee Two members of the Methodist Council</p>

- 1 The 2022 Conference agreed a reduction in the size of the Methodist Conference from 306 representatives to 225 (in addition to a small reduction in the numbers of associate members). This change comes into effect at the Conference of 2024. It also agreed that the proportion of Synod representatives be no less than 70% of the membership, the remainder being made up of various ex-officio groups.
- 2 Within the conversation at the Conference there was a general acceptance that the overall size of the Conference needed to be smaller, to reflect the size of our Church today and to pay attention to the costs – both carbon and financial - of holding such a large scale event. What was less clear was how the Conference wished to reduce the number of ex-officio representatives – and members representing various groups were generally reluctant that their group be reduced in number or removed. The work to clarify the make-up of the ex-officio representatives to the Conference was referred to the Methodist Council to work on, in collaboration with the JDS Committee (which is represented on the Council). This paper offers a way for that work to begin.
- 3 The Conference chose not to agree at this time to changes in the number and arrangement of Districts, having a concomitant effect on the number of Chairs, which is the largest ex-officio group. Further, the Conference also decided to move to replace the Methodist Council and the Strategy and Resources Committee with a Connexional Council, and the expectation is that the members of the Connexional Council will also be representatives to the Conference.

Next Steps

- 4 It is clear that in order to retain the desired proportion of Synod representatives, there will need to be significant changes to the ex-officio representation. The second column below uses the reductions recommended to the 2022 Conference, with the fixed points of the number of District Chairs and members of the Connexional Council added in.

Role/Category	Current Number	Projection
Presidency*	6	6
Secretary*	1	1
Chairs of District*	30	28 due to dual roles (2 in 2023)
Warden of the Diaconal Order*	1	1

Irish Methodist Church Reps*	4	4
Global Relationships*	2	2
UMC Reps	2	2
Conference Elected	9	3
Connexional Council	0	20 max (due to dual roles)
Youth Assembly	4	2
Assistant Secretary	1	1
COLCP	1	1
Record Secretary	1	1
Journal Secretary	1	1
Memorials Cttee Convenor	1	1
Chair of Rep Session Business Committee	1	1
Methodist Council Chair	1	0
SRC Chair	1	0
Forces Chaplain	1	1
Connexional Treasurer	1	1
Connexional Secretary	1	1
Mission Partners (serving)	2	0
EDI representatives	6	3
Secretary of Faith and Order	1	1
Law and Polity	1	1
Stationing Committee	1	0
MWIB	1	0
Total Ex-Officio	82 (27%)	83 (37%)
Synods	224	142
Totals	306	225

- 5 It is clear that it is impossible to reach the required ratio within the constraints of the decisions of the Conference and without removing completely a number of roles and groups. To this end, it seems wise to ask a broader question; ie given that the Conference has agreed to limit the number of full members to 225 and determined that 70% of them need to be representatives of the Synods, who else needs to be present in order for the Conference to do its work?

***RESOLUTIONS

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77/2. The Council directs that a small group be brought together, consisting of five persons, to consider and recommend how the ex-officio proportion of the membership of the Methodist Conference be constituted from 2024 onwards. The group to report back to the spring meeting of the Council.

Membership of the Group:

ASC (Convenor)

Jenny Dyer (Conference Record Secretary)

A person nominated by the JDS Committee

Two members of the Methodist Council