

3. Methodist Council, part 1

Contact name and details	The Revd Gareth J Powell Secretary of the Conference and Secretary of the Council Email soc@methodistchurch.org.uk
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SECTION A GENERAL REPORT

The Methodist Council is charged under SO 211(2) with responsibility to keep in constant review the life of the Methodist Church, to study its work and witness throughout the Connexion, to indicate what changes are necessary or what steps could be taken to make the work of the Church more effective, to give spiritual leadership to the Church and to report annually to the Conference, bringing to the notice of the Conference matters to which it believes the Conference ought to give urgent attention.

The full range of papers presented to the Council and the outcomes of the Council's deliberations on them are available on the Methodist Church website at www.methodist.org.uk/council

The report to the Conference is presented in two parts, this one in volume 1 of the *Agenda* and the second in volume 2 of the *Agenda*. The business conducted by the Council at its meetings in October and January is reported here; and the business conducted at its meeting in April is reported in part 2.

These reports contain those items considered by the Council and not reported elsewhere in the *Agenda*.

1.1 Governance Responsibilities

In accordance with its governance responsibilities, the Council:

- noted the workplan for the Connexional Team and for other bodies for 2015/16;
- appointed connexional committees, trusts and representatives for the year 2015/16;
- received reports from a number of committees and trustee bodies;
- approved the revised list of authorisations and delegations;
- received regular reports from the Strategy and Resources Committee of the Council;
- endorsed principles for further explorations with All We Can concerning the ways in which the relationship between the Church and All We Can might be strengthened, and authorised the Connexional Secretary to form a group to continue discussions;
- made decisions about the Aspinall Robinson Trust and the oversight of other funds held for the benefit of the Methodist Diaconal Order;
- increased the amount allocated from the Fund for Training for the redevelopment cost of 24 Somerset Road;
- received a report on work arising from Notices of Motion and Memorials accepted by earlier Conferences and confirmed that they are considered completed;
- agreed the principles as the basis for the preparation of the budget;
- approved the consultation document to be sent to all members of the Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme (MMPS);
- agreed the formula to be used to split any reduction in the pension contributions as a result of the MMPS consultation;
- approved the draft Articles for the Methodist International Centre Ltd;
- noted that the Team has made available standardised job description templates, in fulfilment of M34 (2014);

- approved terms of reference for a working group to review the arrangements for Covenants of Care and appointed the group;
- received updates on progress from the Past Cases Review Implementation Group;
- agreed the framework and process in order to implement recommendation 9 of the Past Cases Review report;
- adopted a draft supervision policy and agreed to implement a pilot programme of structured supervision from March 2016;
- agreed the terms of reference for a group to undertake a review of training and appointed the group;
- agreed to establish a Local Preacher and Worship Leader Studies Board, made arrangements for its appointment, and delegated the oversight and scrutiny of local preacher and worship leader training to the Studies Board;
- adopted an Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Action Plan;
- agreed to the principle of letting residential properties, including manses, on an assured shorthold tenancy at an undervalue where such lettings will further the charitable objectives of a Circuit or Local Church;
- adopted terms of reference for a working group to address the concerns raised in Notice of Motion 2015/215, Statement on Pornography, and appointed the group;
- approved the changes to the Council's Pay and Grading Policies for employees and agreed to transitional arrangements for lay staff;
- agreed that the Methodist Academies and Schools Trust should be permitted to promote structures through which schools may become academies where that is appropriate and desirable;
- agreed a process and reporting timescale for research into the impact and effect of the *Mapping a Way Forward: Regrouping for Mission* initiative;
- agreed to the implementation of personnel files for ministers, and ways in which these will be developed in subsequent phases;
- made an appointment of a presbyter to the Connexional Team and recommended the change in stationing to the President;
- received a report of a review into the city centre list and commended the work to the Stationing Committee for further consideration;
- appointed a representative to the Board of Trustees of Luther King House Educational Trust;
- appointed the *Singing the Faith* Reference Group;
- responded to Churches Together in England's consultation paper on membership;
- directed the Connexional Team to undertake a review of the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee's terms of reference and appeals process;
- adopted a revised Adoption Leave policy for employees;
- adopted the exhibitions, fringe events, advertising and sponsorship policy for the Conference;
- received a report from Southlands Methodist Trust with particular reference to the Mount Clare Estate and proposals for its redevelopment;
- received a report confirming the outcome of the consultation with the members of the Pension and Assurance Scheme for Lay Employees of the Methodist Church (PASLEMC);
- agreed the terms of reference and appointed a working party to undertake the further work required in the area of accessibility to the Conference;
- adopted the procedure for the reinvitation/appointment of the Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order;
- received a report which outlined how the Church would respond to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, and agreed that the Church should self-refer;

- agreed to proposals for the development of Camden Town Methodist Church, including arrangements for the funding of the project and the trusteeship of the property;
- adopted the terms of reference and membership of the Methodist Council Remuneration Committee;
- encouraged the Secretary of the Conference to undertake a review of SO 962;
- endorsed the development of a Property Development Committee;
- agreed that a letter should be sent to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, constituting self-referral;
- approved the strategy for expressing One Mission through the Church's global relationships, and appointed a Global Relationships Strategic Oversight Sub-Committee;
- approved the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- appointed the Revds John N Bates, David M Butterworth, David R Ellis, Christine Jones, Margaret P Jones, Patrick G Kandeh, Mrs Patricia M Bates and Mrs Elizabeth Holmes to the Ministerial Candidates Selection Committee for 2015/16.

1.2 Other Business

The Council received annual reports from:

- the Connexional Grants Committee;
- the Connexional Manse Trustees;
- the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee;
- the World Methodist Committee;
- the Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies Committee;
- the One Mission Forum;
- the Methodist Heritage Committee.

The Council also:

- engaged in discussion as part of the work on the theology and ecclesiology underpinning the diaconate;
- following a presentation by the Secretary of the Conference, engaged in a discussion set in the context of the Risk Register and the Statistics for Mission for this year.

***RESOLUTION

3/1. The Conference received the General Report of the Council.

SECTION B

CONDITION OF MANSES

1. The 2013 Conference accepted Memorial 23 from the Newcastle upon Tyne District Synod:

M23 Condition of manses

The Newcastle upon Tyne District Synod (R) (Present: 183; Voting: 176 for, 1 against) is grateful for the hard work put in by Circuits to keep manses in good order. We recognise that this is a partnership and acknowledge the part that ministers play in making sure that the manse is an appropriate home for them and their successor.

Aware, however, that a small number of ministers leave the manse in a condition which requires the Circuit to spend considerable money on cleaning and making good where the

property has been abused, it requests the Conference to address this issue and devise ways in which the financial burden does not fall upon the Circuits concerned.

Reply

The Conference thanks the Newcastle upon Tyne Synod for highlighting this issue and joins it in thanking all those who work hard in Circuits to keep manses in good order.

Book VII of The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church (CPD) 'Guidance relating to Ministers' confirms the partnership referred to in the memorial as follows: "In this partnership it is the responsibility of the Circuit (as set out in Standing Orders 533, 803 and 954) to provide a suitable manse, to decorate it and to furnish it with carpets, curtains, a cooker, office furniture and a lawnmower. It is the clear responsibility of the occupants, on the other hand, to keep the manse clean and presentable and at a changeover to make sure that the manse and its circuit furnishings are left clean and tidy. Exceptional circumstances will occasionally arise in which, for various reasons, occupants are unable to fulfil this basic obligation – in which case arrangements should be negotiated with the circuit stewards. Normally, however, incoming ministers can expect to find that their predecessors have left the manse clean and habitable in the ways indicated above."

This places a clear responsibility on ministers when vacating manses, and makes it clear that any arrangements made in response to exceptional circumstances should be by negotiation. It is possible that such arrangements may include ministers being required to meet the costs of any rectification work.

The Conference acknowledges that, although these responsibilities are described clearly in the Standing Orders and guidelines, it can be hard to implement this procedure in practice. It therefore refers this issue to the Ministries Committee to report back to the Conference no later than 2015.

2. The Ministries Committee was charged with bringing a further reply to M23 (2013) to the Conference at a date no later than 2015. The Ministries Committee presented a report to the April 2015 meeting of the Council; the Council requested further work, which was brought to the Council at its meeting in October 2015. The Council commends the further reply to the Memorial and revisions to the Charter for Incoming Ministers (printed in the guidance section of the *Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church*) to the Conference as set out below. Changes to the current wording is shown using ~~striketrough~~ for deleted text and ***bold italics*** for new text.
3. The covenant relationship between the Conference and ministers includes the provision of a manse (as a base for the work of ministry as well as a home), for those in the active work who serve in appointments within the control of the church. For those ministers, the care of the manse and garden is part of their responsibility as Methodist ministers.
4. The provision and maintenance of a manse requires that there is frequent communication between ministers and those responsible for the manse. This begins following the minister's initial visit to the new appointment, with a letter of understanding which includes a schedule of the work that is intended to be done prior to the minister's arrival in the Circuit. The expectation is that the minister would be involved where there are choices to be made about any work to be done on the manse.

5. If it is felt to be appropriate, the circuit manse steward (or district or connexional manse trustee or their representative) will greet the minister (and family) on their arrival and welcome them into their new home. The steward should visit before the welcome service to share a list of contacts in case of a gas, electric or plumbing emergency. The steward should also inform the minister how to report any repairs which need to be undertaken.
6. It is the responsibility of the minister to report any work that needs to be done on the manse to the circuit manse stewards (or district or connexional manse trustees) as soon as it becomes apparent. The manse steward is responsible for logging this and drawing up a schedule of work to be done.
7. Each June or July, there should be a visit to the manse by the circuit manse steward (or district or connexional manse trustee) where a discussion can take place about any work that needs to be done and when such work may be done within a planned maintenance programme (SO 954(i)).
8. It is the responsibility of the occupants to ensure that the manse is kept clean and presentable. Failure to keep the manse clean and presentable should be reported to the responsible person who will contact the district manses committee. Failure by the Circuit to keep the manse in a good repair should be reported by the responsible person to the district manses committee. The district manses committee will act as arbiter in dealing with any matters which cannot be resolved locally.
9. In the last year of an appointment, there should also be a visit two or three months before the outgoing minister moves to assess what additional help may be required to ensure that the garden, hedges etc are left tidy and to ensure that there is a smooth removal of all property including anything in the loft. In the event of failure to leave the manse in a reasonable condition, the outgoing minister will be charged for remedial work caused by misuse or damage, professional cleaning, removal of unwanted belongings or garden rubbish.

A GUIDANCE RELATING TO MINISTERS

Part 1 *Revised Charter for Outgoing and Incoming Ministers*

The Conference of 2000 (Agenda pp. 216–218), in response to a Memorial to the Conference of 1999, adopted a proposal that, to encourage good practice and to increase awareness, the following Charter be printed in this volume. It was re-phrased to reflect the inclusive usage of 'minister' in 2012.

1. In the study/office *incoming* ministers can expect to find:
 - all the information they need to begin their ministry in their new place
 - complete and up-to-date membership lists and pastoral rolls with a list of changes since November 1st last
 - complete and up-to-date committee lists
 - all files tidied with old material either deposited with the County Records Office or filed neatly and separately
 - the legal formalities about Authorised Persons for marriages completed
 - a list of work currently in hand giving whatever details are needed for them to take up that work
 - a pastoral list of those who are currently ill, recently bereaved or in need of a priority visit
 - ***safeguarding records including any Covenants of Care***

- a list of diary dates
- a minimum of outstanding work

2. In the house **outgoing** ministers **should ensure that:** ~~can expect to find:~~

- all carpets **are** cleaned **and vacuumed (the circuit should ensure that they are shampooed if necessary)** (shampooed if necessary) and finally vacuumed before the minister leaves the property
- all curtains **are** cleaned (**if dry clean only, the Circuit should bear the cost**) and re-hung
- all interior paintwork is washed down
- **tiled floors are left clean**
- **light fittings are clean**
- all cupboards **are emptied** empty, cleaned and washed (**inside and out**) so that all shelves are usable immediately
- a clean cooker **the cooker is cleaned**
- **sinks and any built in appliances (such as fridges, freezers, washing machine, dishwasher) are cleaned**
- **bathrooms (floors, tiles, bath/shower, toilets and cupboards) are washed down and cleaned**
- ~~that~~ all domestic refuse has been removed from the premises **and that household bins are emptied (if possible) or left out for collection**
- ~~that anything which had been disarranged by the previous occupants has been put back, rearranged and made good by those occupants~~ **any furnishings which are the property of the Circuit are checked so that they can be disposed of (if damaged) or are put back, rearranged and made good**
- a list of useful information such as the name and address of doctor and dentist, the day for collection of refuse, details of local emergency contacts, etc
- **no furniture is left behind unless provided by the Circuit or by arrangement with the incoming minister**
- **any personal arrangements for telephone or internet have been discontinued and the manse telephone and broadband connection are ready for the new minister**
- **the gas/electric meters have been read and readings sent to the supplier.**

The following additional information should be provided:

- **the alarm code if present**
- **details of the broadband provider including wireless password**
- **details of the final gas/electric readings and a note of the current suppliers**
- **a note of where to find the water stopcock and the main/off switch for electricity and gas**
- a current energy performance certificate
- **the latest Health and Safety and Fire Risk assessments**
- **the updated manse (property) 'log book' including remedial work carried out etc.**
- **information regarding the day and frequency of refuse and recycling collection**
- **a list of local doctors and dentists**
- **bus/train timetables if appropriate**
- **local information (eg shops) if appropriate.**

3. In the garden ministers can expect to find:

- that all hedges and shrubs have been trimmed or pruned at the appropriate time
- all lawns cut
- all beds weeded
- all garden rubbish removed from the premises
- all greenhouses and sheds emptied and swept out
- the garage emptied and swept out – ***anything left must be in agreement with the Circuit Stewards (eg equipment or tins of paint)***
- ***that the lawn mower provided by the Circuit, adequate to the needs of the garden, is clean and in working order***
- ***that the boundaries are identifiable and secure.***

The care of manses is at all times a matter of partnership and co-operation between the occupants and the circuit stewards. To carry out their responsibilities, circuit stewards, for example, whilst respecting the privacy of the manse, must have whatever access is necessary to ensure that the property is kept in good repair and that an annual and ongoing programme of maintenance and redecoration is sustained. Such things should not be left to the few days when a manse may be vacant at a changeover. In this partnership it is the responsibility of the Circuit (as set out in Standing Orders 533, 803 and 954) to provide a suitable manse, to decorate it and to furnish it with carpets, curtains, a cooker, office furniture and a lawnmower. It is the clear responsibility of the occupants, on the other hand, to keep the manse clean and presentable and at a changeover to make sure that the manse and its circuit furnishings are left clean and tidy. Exceptional circumstances will occasionally arise in which, for various reasons, occupants are unable to fulfil this basic obligation – in which case arrangements should be negotiated with the circuit stewards. Normally, however, incoming ministers can expect to find that their predecessors have left the manse clean and habitable in the ways indicated above.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

3/2. The Conference adopted the Report as its further reply to M23 (2013).

3/3. The Conference adopted the Revised Charter for Incoming and Outgoing Ministers and directed that it be printed in the Guidance Section of the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church.

SECTION C

CONNEXIONAL TEAM REPORT

- 1 The Council received an update of work undertaken by the Connexional Team, some of which involves engagement with Methodists across the globe, as well as the work going on in the clusters of the Team.
- 2 Building work has continued in Methodist Church House and the forbearance of the staff, tenants and those using the building needs to be acknowledged. Working on a live building site has brought many challenges but as each week goes by the end of the overall programme becomes closer.

EMC Response to Refugee Crisis

- 3 Following the European Methodist Council (EMC) in Ruse, Bulgaria, 12-15 September 2015 a pastoral letter was sent to all member churches. It ended with the words:
“We believe that God also calls us to welcome those who arrive as our fellow pilgrims. We commit ourselves to immediate actions and the long-term perspectives that the issues

raised by migration require. With a united voice, the European Methodist Council calls on our fellow citizens across the continent to join us in reflection and action.”

- 4 The European Methodist Council set up a working group and asked the European Methodist Children and Youth Council to send representatives to that group. The group ‘meets’ once a month via phone call in order to share best practices of migrant ministries and seek to support one another as Methodists in Europe. A newsletter is also issued to inform and encourage the people in our Connexion to reach out to our new neighbours throughout Europe.
- 5 The EMC included in this newsletter that Methodists in Great Britain have been reaching out to the refugees and engaging with politicians and people who put their emphasis in protecting the country from refugees instead of protecting those who flee war and conflict.
- 6 A few of the examples listed include:
 - Birmingham Methodist Churches & Citizens UK successful campaign to win promise of 50 homes for refugees from the local council;
 - Wesley Hall Methodist Church, Blackburn’s Asylum and Refugee Community centre, set up 11 years ago, continuing to offer support through the asylum application process and afterwards ;
 - Fleet Methodist Church receives donations to be sent to the Calais refugee camps – a typical involvement;
 - Growing solidarity with Syrian refugees in the Shetland Islands churches, raising money, awareness and an openness to welcome people ;
 - York Methodist churches will also offer to house a refugee family.
- 7 Since the Council’s affirmation of the work on refugees, the Team has been able to engage a short term consultant with expertise in this area to supplement the work of the JPIT team. This will enable the Team to engage on the issues on a wider stage as well as offer more support to churches who are wishing to respond to this ongoing situation. Through our work with Citizens UK we have been able to register an interest in the National Welcome Board’s private sponsorship of refugees initiative on behalf of the Church.
- 8 With regard to the wider European Methodist Council work, the 2015 Conference welcomed the possibility of new partnerships in mission and service overseen by the EMC and directed the Council to explore, in conjunction with the Connexional Grants Committee, what level of resources can be made available to enable the development of such work. The resourcing of the EMC was discussed at the September gathering, and more work will be carried out in the year ahead before any application is made.
- 9 Further to the decision of the 2015 Conference (Resolution 57/1) to direct the Council and the Heritage Committee to liaise with the Cornwall District on the possible development of Methodist Heritage opportunities in Cornwall, the Council has noted that the Connexional Team has engaged with the District and has recommended two elements of scoping work for which a connexional grant application might be the appropriate route. The Revd Ward Jones, on behalf of the Heritage Committee, is meeting with the representatives of the District to explore with them the link between heritage and mission. The consultation continues to evolve and further reports will be made to the Council as soon as possible.

Engagement with the United Methodist Church

- 10 Positive engagement continues with the United Methodist Church, and initial work towards planning celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the concordat which will take place in 2018.

Further working with All We Can

- 11 Following All We Can's paper to the Council in October 2015 (MC/15/73), further discussions have since taken place with them to consider the best way forward about how we work together. David Matthews, member of the Council, and Helen Woodall, member of the SRC, are working with the Connexional Secretary in this area.

*****RESOLUTION**

3/4. The Conference received the Report.

SECTION D

NOTICES OF MOTION REFERRED TO THE COUNCIL

The Conference referred the following three Notices of Motion to the Council, without the Conference expressing a mind on the matter concerned.

Notice of Motion 2015/210: National Insurance Payments

The Conference:

- *expresses its concern over the inability of the payroll service provided by the Connexion to many churches, Circuits and Districts, in regard to the payment of National Insurance (NI), to meet the situation where an individual has part-time employments with more than one church body;*
- *notes that, as a result of the payroll service not recognising churches, Circuits and Districts as separate employers, employees and employing bodies are paying extra NI over and above what is required, costing individuals and employing bodies considerable extra expense;*
- *directs the Methodist Council to consider carefully how this situation can be resolved, provide advice to churches, Circuits and Districts as quickly as possible and report to the Conference of 2016.*

The Council heard that the current payroll system does not enable this to be done, without infringing HMRC rules. However, work is underway to identify and implement a new system. The Council therefore instructed the Connexional Team, under the oversight of the Strategy and Resources Committee, to take Notice of Motion 2015/210 into account when specifying a new payroll system.

Notice of Motion 2015/211: Significant Anniversaries

The Conference, mindful that 2018 will mark the 75th Anniversary of MHA, and 2019 the 150th Anniversary of Action for Children, looks forward to marking these significant landmarks.

Consequently it directs the Methodist Council to engage with both charities in order to ensure that 2018/19 will offer opportunities for the Methodist people to celebrate these two examples of our practical Christian Social Concern.

The Council affirmed the spirit of Notice of Motion 2015/211 and directed the Connexional Team to liaise with MHA and Action for Children in order to consider ways in which the significant anniversaries might be marked throughout the Connexion.

Notices of Motion 2015/212 and 221

Notice of Motion 2015/212: The Value of Human Life

The Conference:

Believes that every human life is of intrinsic value and ought to be affirmed and cherished.

Notes its previously expressed opposition to euthanasia, in the Statement adopted by the 1974 Conference.

Expresses serious concern about moves to legalise assisted dying, which would have a seriously detrimental effect on the wellbeing of individuals and on the nature and shape of our society, and can only add to the pressures that many vulnerable terminally ill people will feel, placing them at increased risk of distress and coercion at a time when they most need love and support.

Believes that the hallmarks of a truly compassionate society include high quality palliative care, greater support for carers and enhanced end of life services. It commends those who provide these, whether professionally or voluntarily, but feels that more could and should be done.

Calls upon Her Majesty's Government to give such services a higher priority and upon the Methodist people to increase the practical and prayerful support they give to the terminally ill and to their carers.

Notice of Motion 2015/221: Amendment to Notice of Motion 2015/212 'The Value of Human Life'

Third bullet point to read: 'Notes the serious concern expressed by many about moves to legalise assisted dying, which they believe would have a seriously detrimental effect on the wellbeing of individuals and on the nature and shape of our society and could add...' (last lines as printed). Fourth bullet to read: 'Also notes the position of others that, where death is considered both certain and imminent, a compassionate due judicial dispensation to allow assisted end-of-life could be appropriate'

The Council was presented with options to enable it to decide how it wished to proceed, in the light of the Conference not having expressed its mind. The Council agreed that it wished to resource the churches better to respond to the needs of patients and carers facing decisions about end-of-life. Work to support this resolution of the Council is therefore now underway.

*****RESOLUTION**

3/5. The Conference received the report of the decisions of the Council in respect of Notices of Motion which were referred to the Council from the 2015 Conference.

SECTION E

JOSEPH RANK TRUST

1. The Joseph Rank Trust is an independent Christian grant-making organisation, and is a practical expression of the strong Christian beliefs of their founder (Joseph Rank) and his desire to advance the Christian faith and to help the less fortunate members of society.
2. The Trust has provided a number of grants to various parts of the Methodist Church in the Britain, and also towards the Methodist Church in Ireland, and details of the grants made to the Methodist Church of Great Britain in 2015 were reported to the Council, totalling £607,500.

*****RESOLUTION**

3/6. The Conference received the Report.