

### 3. Methodist Council, part 1

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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](http://www.methodist.org.uk/council)

The report to the Conference is presented in two parts, this one in Volume 1 of the Agenda and part two in Volume 2 of the Agenda.

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:

- appointed connexional committees, trusts and representatives for the year 2021/2022;
- received reports from a number of committees and trustee bodies;
- approved the revised list of authorisations and delegations;
- received reports from the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) of the Council at each meeting;
- received reports at each meeting from the Connexional Team on how each objective is being supported;
- adopted the corporate risk register;
- adopted the updated anti-fraud policy and fraud response action plan;
- approved the Memorandum of Understanding with Wesley House Cambridge;
- appointed the Revd Nicholas A Oborski as a member of the Council for the connexional year 2021/2022;
- approved the composition of the scrutiny committee required by Notice of Motion 2020/103;
- pursuant to SO 315(2), the Council agreed to recommend the extension of the Revd Dr Paul Nzacahayo's appointment as a Methodist Tutor (half time) for a period of five years from 1 September 2022;
- noted with thanks the grants provided by the Joseph Rank Trust in 2021;
- agreed to relinquish the reversionary gift left to the Mission in Britain Fund under Trust 8669, and to authorise the release of the capital from the Trust for the purpose of upkeep and repairs of the circuit manse in the Bangor and Holyhead Circuit;
- pursuant to SO 973(1A), confirmed its adopted criteria for the classification of a project as a replacement project, with effect from 1 September 2021;
- adopted standards and criteria in respect of District Safeguarding Groups;
- approved the addition of the new anti-bullying policy to the Safeguarding Policy;
- agreed that Managing Trustees of Local Church, Circuit and District Model Trust property may grant assured shorthold tenancy agreements of residential Model

Trust property at below the market rent where the properties are to be occupied under the “Afghan Citizens’ Resettlement Scheme”, without the need for the consent of the Council under Model Trust 20 in each individual case;

- established a task group to review the various appeals processes which apply to the decisions of particular oversight bodies;
- approved an increase in the maximum allowance for loss of earnings with effect from 1 September 2022, agreeing the list of bodies to which the policy applies and directing the Connexional Allowances Committee to consider the question of the appropriate level of the allowance each year.

## **1.2 Other business**

The Council received annual reports from:

- the Property Development Committee;
- the Global Relationships Committee;
- Southlands College;
- the Methodist Heritage Committee.

As directed by the Conference, the Council considered further the report *Looking to the Future* along with the conversation which had been held at the 2021 Conference.

### **\*\*\*RESOLUTION**

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

## **SECTION B**

### **SENIOR MANAGEMENT GROUP OF THE CONNEXIONAL TEAM**

As provided for in SO 304(5), the Strategy and Resources Committee approved the membership of the Senior Management Group in addition to those listed in the Standing Order. In doing so, the Committee recommended a policy change to the composition of the Senior Management Group. The Council concurred with the recommendation that the Standing Order be amended to remove the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice from the membership of this group. Following consultation with the current office holder, the Council felt that this responsibility was not a priority for this role. The Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice will continue to attend meetings of the Group where there is business which requires her input. The Council therefore recommends that the Standing Order is amended as shown below.

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

**3/2. The Conference received the Report.**

**3/3. The Conference amended SO 304(5) as follows:**

(5) The senior 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.

## **SECTION C**

### **MEMORIAL 23 (2018): COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS**

The 2018 Conference received the following memorial and adopted the reply shown below:

*The London District Synod, Representative Session (Present: 194; Voting: 192 for, 0 against) expresses its great concern about the cost of housing in our cities, towns and villages throughout the country. London CLT has pioneered the first urban community*

*land trust in the UK. This community benefit society is not for profit and provides homes, which are affordable by linking their value to local incomes. Their homes sell at between one third and one-half of the open market price. The importance of community land trusts is that the homes are permanently affordable and cannot be sold on the open market. The London District Synod believes that Methodist Church land can be used to provide homes which are affordable in perpetuity and that this is an important part of our gospel mission to bring good news to the poor. The District is supporting a pilot project on church land in Wembley to provide homes on this basis for the local Church and its community.*

*The London District requests the connexional Property Development Committee to include community land trust developments as part of the Church's strategic approach to using church land for affordable homes throughout the Connexion where there is need; and to report to the 2020 Conference.*

*Reply*

*The Conference thanks the London District Synod for drawing to its attention the problems of affordable housing and the contributions made by community land trusts to making affordable housing more easily available.*

*As part of the development of a connexional Property Strategy, the Property Development Committee has already given some initial consideration to how the Methodist Church might be able to work in partnership with existing trusts or establish its own community land trust. As part of the Methodist Church's commitment to working in partnership with others, the Committee is already undertaking further work on this matter so as to ensure the most faithful, effective and life-enhancing use of Methodist property for all God's people. It is hoped that the connexional Property Strategy will be considered by the Methodist Council in October 2018.*

*The Conference therefore accepts the memorial, directing the Property Development Committee to report on this work as part of its own reporting to the Methodist Council as soon as possible.*

The Property Development Committee reported to the Council that it has explored this area, obtaining legal advice, and acknowledging the constraints of Model Trust 20, and the complications that not all community land trusts are charities. The view of the Committee, supported by the Council, is that it is not able to pursue this option, given all the constraints, at this time.

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

**3/4. The Conference received the Report.**

**3/5. The Conference adopted the Report as its further reply to Memorial M23 (2018).**

### **SECTION D REVIEW OF PART 11**

1. In 2019, the Conference committed to undertaking a review of Part 11 of the Standing Orders further to having adopted Notice of Motion 2019/202:

*Notice of Motion 2019/202: Reviewing Part 11 of Standing Orders: In the light of the significant changes, both in UK society and for the Methodist Church of Great Britain since our Standing Orders regarding complaints and discipline were drawn up, the Conference directs the Methodist Council to set the terms of reference for, and facilitate the work of a thorough review of Part 11 of our Standing Orders. This review should include and address how processes of Safeguarding, Complaints and Discipline, and Connexional Team Grievances, can best relate to each other.*

*The Conference seeks a set of processes that are able to be enacted in timescales that are fair for all concerned and that are appropriate to the capacity, resources and size of the Methodist Church of Great Britain as it is today.*

2. The Church's subsequent participation in the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) in 2020 also highlighted a need to re-examine the working of our complaints and discipline processes, which was partly criticised in evidence given to the Inquiry and reproduced within that Committee's interim report.
3. The Council agreed a set of terms of reference for this work at its meeting in October 2019. However, staff changes and the disruption caused by COVID-19 from March 2020 onwards delayed the start of intense work on this.
4. After initial consultation in December 2020 to obtain input from a wide cross-section of people across the Church, a stakeholder event was held in January 2021, which helped to clarify and provide focus on the specific issues that needed to be addressed. Once these had been identified, the project progressed through work-streams, each of which had the task of looking at a particular aspect of the Review.
5. A draft report was considered by the Complaints and Discipline Subcommittee of the Law and Polity Committee in November 2021 which referred it to a small group to consider what work was still needed.

### **Next Steps**

6. It had originally been hoped that the Council would be able to present a full report to the 2022 Conference. However, there are three reasons why the Council considers it better for the process to be given another year, viz:
  - Not all the workstreams have been able to report and it is hoped that there might still be material that can be incorporated into the final document.
  - The final report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) is expected in summer 2022. Criticism of the Methodist Church in the September 2021 report on religious organisations and settings was focused on the ways in which discipline matters had been handled. It might be that IICSA makes further recommendations about how the complaints of victims/survivors are addressed in Church processes.
  - The 2021 Conference adopted the Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity. There is still work to be done on the integration of the recommendations in that strategy into a proposed revision of Part 11.
7. With this in mind, the Council proposes to the Conference that the report is brought to the 2023 Conference.

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

#### **3/6 The Conference received the Report.**

#### **SECTION E**

#### **MODEL TRUST 14(2A) POLICY**

1. Model Trust 14(2A) is the provision in our constitution which permits other Christian congregations to use Methodist Model Trust premises for non-Methodist worship, provided this will not offend our doctrinal standards.
2. With effect from 1 September 2021 Model Trust 14(2A) reads as follows:  
*(2A) Notwithstanding that any of the members of any church or congregation hereinafter mentioned may not subscribe to the doctrinal standards, the managing trustees may with the consent of such person or persons as the Conference may by Standing Order prescribe permit the use of a place of worship or any other premises comprised in the property by members of one or more Christian churches or congregations, either for particular occasions or for a period [...] determined by the*

*managing trustees by way of a licence or a lease, provided that [...] such consent as aforesaid shall be given only in cases where to grant such permission would not (having regard to all the circumstances) offend the doctrinal standards.*

3. The Council reports to the Conference that it adopted the following Model Trust 14(2A) policy recommendations:
  - a. Licences may be granted for up to three years at a time before being required to be renewed. This is to allow for regular reviews of the use of the premises. The same terms and precedent licence should be used as for the existing 12-month licence.
  - b. Licence fees must at least be on a 'break-even' basis.
  - c. It is too difficult at this stage to set the detailed terms and parameters under which a lease might be granted, and therefore applications for consent should be made on a case-by-case basis, to be assessed and considered by a group of three Council members on behalf of the Council in a similar way to Model Trust 20(1) applications.
  - d. When considering applications for consent to leases under Model Trust 14(2A), the basic 'ground rules' should be as follows:
    - i. Leases should be at full market rent.
    - ii. Leases should be excluded from the security of tenure provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954.
    - iii. Lease terms should not exceed 5 years unless a compelling case can be made for longer. The lease should ideally include at least one landlord's break clause during the term (probably at the end of the third year), to enable the local church/Circuit to take the premises back into its own use if required.
    - iv. Leases of part of a building with no separate access to the demised premises should be prohibited. Leases of buildings with separate self-contained access should be acceptable.
  - e. It is recognised that Superintendents need guidance when considering applications for consent under Model Trust 14(2A); this will be compiled by the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice in consultation with the Ecumenical Officers.
  - f. The Faith and Order Committee has been reflecting on the meaning of the phrase 'offend the doctrinal standards' and its views should be incorporated into the formal Model Trust 14(2A) policy wording.

### **\*\*\*RESOLUTION**

#### **3/7. The Conference received the Report.**

### **SECTION F REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF YOUTH PRESIDENT**

#### **Introduction**

1. The 2019 Conference adopted the following Notice of Motion:  
**Notice of Motion 2019/201: Review of the role of Youth President**

The Conference notes the positive impact of the 2008 Youth Participation Strategy, especially the position of the Youth President. The Methodist Church, 3Generate and the Connexional Team have gone through an enormous amount of change in the past 11 years.

Recognising these changes, the Conference directs the Methodist Council to appoint a task group (to include at least 1 past Youth President, 1 past President or Vice-President of the Conference, 1 local youth worker, 1 former youth representative, 1 current youth representative and 2 other persons):

1. in consultation with 3Generate and former Youth Presidents to review the job description, person specification and other relevant aspects of the role of Methodist Youth President, and to present recommendations on how to develop the role for the next decade.
  2. to report and bring recommendations to the Methodist Conference no later than 2021.
2. The October 2019 meeting of the Council appointed a task group and agreed terms of reference for the group.
  3. The March 2021 meeting of the Council approved an extension to the review period, in order to complete the remaining consultations and allow more time to understand the impact of home-working on the role.
  4. This report outlines the research and consultation undertaken by the task group and the conclusions and recommendations that have arisen.

### **History of the Youth Presidency**

5. In preparation for the 50th anniversary of MAYC, 14 months were spent in discussion, prayer and consultation to catch the vision that young people in 1995 had for the Methodist Church. This process and vision was called Charter 95 and led to the creation of Methodist Youth Conference and the Youth Executive, including the role of Youth President.
6. In 2004 it was decided to review the Youth Executive and Youth Conference. The review proposed that greater emphasis on youth participation in every area of Church life was needed. This led to the Youth Participation Strategy (YPS). The Youth President role became a year-long paid post.
7. The Methodist Conference in 2010 approved changing the Youth President role to part-time as part of YPS budget cuts.
8. In 2011, a review of the role of the Youth President was undertaken. The Methodist Council adopted seven recommendations, as follows:
  - i. the Youth President role be a full-time paid post
  - ii. a full-time office-holder be expected to engage more fully with the voices of younger children
  - iii. an overseas trip be offered to a Youth President
  - iv. a Youth President's Advisory Group be established
  - v. the Youth President Designate should be offered the opportunity to shadow the Youth President
  - vi. the Youth President role should be office-based, supported by the most appropriate managerial route that could be established by the Connexional Team, and integrated into formal leadership meetings where possible
  - vii. appropriate formal training be offered for the Youth President, which could be undertaken in their designate year if appropriate.
9. There have been no major reviews of or changes to the role of the Youth President since the 2011 review.

### **Methodology and consultations**

10. The task group considered the following reports in undertaking the review:
  - i. Charter 95
  - ii. The report to the 2005 Conference, titled, "The Nature of Oversight: Leadership, Management and Governance in the Methodist Church in Great Britain"
  - iii. The Youth Participation Strategy

- iv. Youth Presidency Review report of Working Party for Council April 2011
  - v. The current job description, person specification and related recruitment documents for the Youth President
  - vi. Standing Order 250, relating to the children and youth assembly and the role of the Youth President
11. The task group undertook the following consultations to inform the review:
- i. A questionnaire available online and via the 3Generate app to survey children and young people.
  - ii. A questionnaire sent to the past Youth Presidents who had served between connexional years 2010/2011 and 2018/2019.
  - iii. A consultation meeting with the Youth Representatives
  - iv. Receiving a written reflection from the Head of Mission
  - v. Receiving a written reflection on the term “presidency” from the then-Vice President of the Conference, Professor Clive Marsh
  - vi. Receiving a written reflection from the Faith and Order Committee
  - vii. Interviews with past Youth Presidents, Connexional Team staff members who work closely with the Youth President, and ecumenical partners in the Church of England and United Reformed Church.
  - viii. A consultation with the children and young people at 3Generate 2021.
12. The task group did not undertake a consultation with children and young people (under 23) not affiliated to 3Generate, nor with individuals who have hosted visits by the Youth President in the last three years. This was due to increased workload and reduced capacity following the COVID-19 pandemic, and the decision to focus research with those who have interacted most with the post-holders.

### **Themes and observations**

13. Early research highlighted seven key areas of interest for review, namely: purpose of the role and responsibilities, title of the post, location and base, support and training, recruitment, length of service and terms and conditions, and key relationships and partnerships. This was reported in the interim review.
14. Further research and consultations explored these seven areas and concluded that there were only four areas in which significant changes may be warranted. These were:
- i. Purpose of the role – what is the most important part of the role of the Youth President? Is it their advocacy on behalf of children and young people with the decision-makers of MCB, or their on-the-ground encouragement of children and young people, or their position as a role model to/ spokesperson of young Methodists, or something else?
  - ii. Location and base – should the role continue to be London-based, or could future Youth Presidents work from home? Should they travel physically to visit children and young people, or virtually (in order to reduce carbon emissions)? Should they visit one of our Global Partners?
  - iii. Length of service – should the role continue to be a fixed-term one-year post, or should it be of longer duration? Should post-holders be able to stand for re-election?
  - iv. Terms and conditions – should the post-holder be appointed or elected? Could the role be divided so that a permanent full-time Secretary supports an elected fixed-term President (as with the Secretariat and Presidency of the Conference)?
15. These four areas were brought to 3Generate 2021 for a final consultation to enable a decision.
16. At 3Generate 2021, four static boards were available all weekend, which young people could interact with in a creative manner. There was also a 45-minute discussion

session around the boards, engaging with young people and their youth workers. The four boards asked the following questions:

- i. (A) What do you think the role should do? (B) What title should the role have?
- ii. How long should the role be in post?
- iii. Should the role be voted for by 3Gen or is there a better method?
- iv. Is the Youth President visiting Youth Groups in person important to the role? Or do the visits becoming virtual make more sense?

Each board had some suggested answers, but young people were also encouraged to make their own suggestions. Engagement over the weekend was good, particularly during the discussion session. Those who engaged at 3Generate represented a range of ages, ethnicities, locations, and understandings of Church.

## Recommendations

17. Based on the consultations and evidence laid out above, the following recommendations are proposed:
  - i. The role should continue to be called “Youth President”, as there is good awareness and understanding of the role across the Connexion.
  - ii. The role should be refocused around two core purposes: advocacy and involvement in decision-making.
    - Advocacy – the Youth President should act as a conduit (amongst other conduits) for the voices of the children and young people of the Methodist Church and should also challenge and inspire others to advocate for children and young people. The Youth President should work alongside the other young people, especially the Youth Representatives, and the District Ambassadors in order to hear a wide range of voices within the life of the Church.
    - Involvement in decision-making – the Youth President should attend the Council (see below for more on Council attendance), the Conference and the Connexional Leaders’ Forum to represent the voices of children and young people and take part in conferring and decision-making. The continued reaffirmation of *Our Calling* has led to work being undertaken to review the existing structures of the Methodist Church, and the Council should ensure that the Youth President is invited to similar decision-making fora within the new structures.
  - iii. It is proposed that the Youth President should be permitted to send one of the Youth Representatives to deputise for them at the Council if they so choose.
  - iv. The role of the Youth President should be offered as either an office-based (at Methodist Church House, London) or home-based role, as patterns of working since the COVID-19 pandemic have changed to enable this option.
  - v. The Youth President should adopt a hybrid approach to visiting local youth groups, in order to balance the benefits of in-person interaction with the cost (in terms of travel fares, working hours and environmental impact) of travel.
  - vi. The role of Youth President should continue to be offered as a one-year post. This recommendation is proposed in order to maintain the current budget, ensure a diversity of new candidates bringing different skills and vision each year into the post and to safeguard the wellbeing of the post holder.
  - vii. The role of the Youth President should continue to be recruited in the same manner. Specifically, with a written application and interview, followed by an election at the same time as 3Generate, the Methodist Children and Youth Assembly. The task group notes the imperfect system of electing a paid employee of the Council, but this is still felt to be the best recruitment method for this role. The Connexional Team should amend the interview process to ensure that there is consultation with under 12s, under-18s and under-23s.
  - viii. Standing Order 250 should be amended so that all children and young people within the life of the Methodist Church are eligible to vote in all 3Generate, the Methodist Children and Youth Assembly, elections, including but not limited to the election of the Youth President. The Law and Polity Committee will work with



children and youth representatives to consider the work that is required in respect of SO 250, in the light of inclusive church policies.

### **Future areas of work**

18. The task group commends the way that young people continue to be involved in the development of this role, and notes the following as potential areas for future work:
  - i. Work around the relationship between the Youth President and the Global Church, particularly in light of the Global Church Youth Representative roles.
  - ii. Work around the role of the Youth Representatives, in particular their relationship to the Youth President.
  - iii. Work to review Standing Order 250 in its entirety, in light of this report, the development of the role of District Ambassador, and the development of the Youth Representatives.
  - iv. Work to consider how to enable Ex-Youth Presidents to have a role within the life of the Church and 3Generate, the Methodist Children and Youth Assembly.

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

**3/8. The Conference received the Report.**

**3/9. The Conference adopted the recommendations as set out in paragraph 17 of the Report.**