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

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 2016/2017;
- appointed connexional committees, trusts and representatives for the year 2016/2017;
- 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;
- received reports from the Connexional Team at each meeting;
- gave approval for Westminster College Oxford Trust to proceed with a new lease agreement with Oxford Brookes University;
- received a report from the Global Relationships Strategic Oversight Sub-Committee and approved the lists of partner churches and partner organisations, and adopted the Sub-Committee's recommendations of what should be reported to the World Council of Churches;
- approved the sale of Swaythling Methodist Church under Model Trust 20 subject to agreed overage provisions;
- approved the updated Risk Management Policy and the updated Corporate Risk Register;
- adopted criteria for exceptions to the application of the CPF levy under SO 973(5);
- amended the terms of reference for the Property Development Committee;
- appointed the working parties as directed by the 2016 Conference;
- approved the updated Insurance Management Procedure;
- resolved to apply for Living Wage Employer accreditation from the Living Wage Foundation;
- approved the Collecting Policy and supporting Donation Agreement, brought by the Methodist Heritage Committee;
- delegated managing trusteeship for some collections to the Heritage Committee and directed the Heritage Committee to undertake further work on clarifying those objects and collections for which the Council holds managing trusteeship;

- under the provisions of Standing Order 335(3A) approved exchanges of pastorates to take place under the auspices of the World Methodist Committee;
- agreed to the signing of a community agreement with the European Methodist Council;
- responded to 'A New Framework for Local Unity in Mission' issued by Churches Together in England;
- appointed Deacon Julie Hudson and Ms Virtue Ryan to the Conference Business Committee for 2017, under the provisions of SO 136(1C);
- requested further conversations regarding the relationship between All We Can and the Methodist Church;
- agreed, by the required majority, to recommend the extension of the appointment of the Revd Neil A Stubbens as Connexional Ecumenical Officer for a further year from 1 September 2017;
- transferred managing trusteeship and all other governance responsibilities for Methodist International Centre to the Property Development Committee;
- received a report of the audit of the implementation of the Past Cases Review report;
- appointed, on behalf of the Conference, the Revd Kenneth G Howcroft to chair the task group appointed by the 2016 Conference to update the Statement of the judgement of the Conference on marriage and relationships and to oversee the process of consulting with the Methodist people on the definition of marriage;
- co-opted Deacon Ian Murray to serve on the Ministerial Candidates' Selection Committee for 2016/2017;
- amended the policy on leases to permit three members of the Property Development Committee to grant an exception to the policy on security of tenure and therefore to permit a lease of Methodist premises or land to be granted with security of tenure.

1.2 Other Business

The Council received annual reports from:

- the Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies Committee;
- the One Mission Forum;
- the Methodist Heritage Committee.

The Council also:

- engaged in discussions about developing vocations;
- spent time considering how the connexional principle might be expressed differently in the areas of property, finances and ministry.

*****RESOLUTION**

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

SECTION B

RESHAPING THE YORKSHIRE DISTRICTS

Following a full consultation of the Circuits of the four Yorkshire Districts (Leeds, Sheffield, West Yorkshire, York and Hull) and voting in the District Synods as required by SO 401(2), the Council recommends to the Conference that the four Yorkshire Districts should be reconfigured to three, as set out below. The Council further recommends that shared and federated working between the Districts be reviewed and expanded as appropriate. The Council noted that other boundaries bordering on the Yorkshire Districts may need to be reviewed at a later stage. The Council expressed its thanks to each of the Districts for the way in which they had taken this process forward.

The proposed new Districts are as follows:

The Yorkshire North and East District

comprising the current York and Hull District, the Pateley Bridge Circuit, the Nidd Valley Circuit.

The Yorkshire West District
comprising the current West Yorkshire District, the Leeds (South and West) Circuit, the Leeds (North and East) Circuit, the Aire and Calder Circuit, the Wharfedale and Aireborough Circuit.
The Sheffield District

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

3/3. The Conference adopted the recommendation of the Council that the York and Hull, Leeds, Sheffield and West Yorkshire Districts should be reconfigured into three new Districts as set out in the report.

SECTION C
CIRCUIT AMALGAMATION ACROSS A DISTRICT BOUNDARY

The Council heard that the Northampton District Synod and the Lincolnshire District Synod had voted in favour of a circuit merger which crosses a district boundary. The Council agreed to recommend to the Conference that the Stamford and Rutland Circuit and the South Lincolnshire Circuit join to form a new Circuit which will be located in the Northampton District. It is proposed that the new Circuit will be known as the Stamford Circuit, with the number 23/15.

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

3/5. The Conference adopted the recommendation of the Council that the Stamford and Rutland Circuit and the South Lincolnshire Circuit merge to form a new Circuit within the Northampton District, with effect from 1 September 2017.

SECTION D
NOTICES OF MOTION REFERRED TO THE COUNCIL

The 2016 Conference referred the following two Notices of Motion to the Council, without the Conference expressing a mind on the matters concerned.

1. Notice of Motion 2016/202 Safeguarding and DBS Checks
The Conference notes an inconsistency in the Safer Recruitment Policy guidance on p751 of Volume 2 of CPD.

Under "Part 1 Qualification for Appointment under S.O. 010(3), and Duty to Obtain Disclosures", and specifically within the section "Note regarding Safeguarding", there is at b) provision for supernumeraries no longer capable of preaching to be exempt from having a criminal records check, but there is no similar exemption permitted, at c), for local preachers no longer capable of preaching.

The Conference therefore amends the Safer Recruitment Policy by harmonising b) and c) in this regard. Thus c) states: "All local preachers capable of preaching and worship leaders."

The Conference referred the Motion to the Methodist Council.

The Council considered this matter, and, in light of the current requirements for all supernumeraries to have an up to date DBS check (unless an exemption has been agreed following a declaration that they will no longer undertake public ministry), agreed that local preachers and worship leaders should be subject to the same provisions.

The Council agreed that all accredited local preachers and worship leaders should have an up to date DBS and undertake required safeguarding training unless they are no longer active in preaching or leadership within the Church, and have signed a declaration logged with their superintendent minister. The Council directed that the guidance should be updated to effect the changes as proposed in the notice of motion.

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

2. Notice of Motion 2016/207 Fracking

Hydraulic fracturing, the process known as fracking, involves drilling into the earth and directing a high-pressure water mixture at the rock to release the gas inside. There has been relatively little research into fracking but areas of the United States have suffered small earthquakes and water pollution believed to have been caused by fracking, as fracking involves shale gas, it seems that this process will contribute to climate change.

The Conference therefore:
- *directs the Joint Public Issues Team to research fracking and to consider producing resources on this issue.*
- *directs the Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment to consider the ethics of companies involved in fracking, especially following recent discussions regarding fossil fuels.*

The Council noted that the 2000 Conference adopted an environmental policy which sought to challenge Methodist people to "care for the earth by following sustainable practice and taking into account global and local environmental considerations for present and future generations". In 2011, *Hope in God's Future* was adopted as a Statement of the Conference, recognising that global warming presents questions that demand ethical and spiritual reflection as well scientific and political analysis. Study of this work was commended again to the Church by the 2016 Conference (NoM 2016/206).

In recent years the Joint Public Issues Team has engaged with Parliamentarians, Methodist members and the wider public on the Climate Change Act and the UK's energy policy and in the course of this work has considered the implications of developing shale gas resources in the UK. The Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church has screened its investments and identified a small number of companies with varying levels of exposure to fracking.

The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) is working on a briefing for members of the four JPIT church partners, to be made available through the Methodist Church and JPIT websites. The briefing draws on published information to inform and stimulate discussion of this topic and the policy issues associated with it. JPIT is not equipped to undertake 'scientific' research and does not propose to go beyond the work already undertaken to produce this briefing.

The Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment has provided advice in relation to climate change and fossil fuel policies. The Central Finance Board policy paper *Climate Change Policy - Implications for Different Fuels* identifies concerns in relation to companies whose business models are dedicated to exploring for and developing new assets which imply a low probability of meeting emissions reduction targets. This policy paper does not address the issue of fracking directly. However, as a result of its implementation nine companies were excluded from potential investment, reflecting concerns over their business models. In 2017 the Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment will discuss and advise on the nature of any active engagement with companies involved in fracking.

The Council welcomed the UK Government's ratification of the Paris COP21 agreement, directed the attention of churches and circuits to the briefing paper on fracking prepared by the Joint Public Issues Team. The Council encouraged the Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment and the Central Finance Board to bring to the attention of companies involved in fracking the concerns of the Methodist Church. In so doing, the Council considered this to be a sufficient response to the concerns raised by the notice of motion.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

3/7. The Conference received the Report.

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 2016 were reported to the Council, totalling £654,050.

*****RESOLUTION**

3/8. The Conference received the Report.

SECTION F
PENSION CONTRIBUTION LEVELS REVIEW

The 2016 Conference received the following two Memorials.

Memorial M17 Pension contributions from Lay Employees

The Church should provide greater encouragement than is currently the case for lay employees to make pension contributions. This could be achieved with a simple amendment to the current requirements whereby the minimum employee contribution is set at 2% of salary. The minimum employer contribution would remain at 6% and the combined contribution rate of 8% will meet the auto enrolment requirements for 2019 and beyond. Employing bodies should be asked to encourage their lay employees to make higher contributions (and may wish to offer financial incentives to do so) recognising that in current economic circumstances even a combined contribution of 12% is estimated to be far from adequate to provide a satisfactory pension for most people."

The Wirral (18/9) Circuit Meeting requests the Conference to reduce the minimum pension contribution required to be paid by lay employees if they are also to benefit from employer contributions.

The Conference referred the memorial to the Methodist Council and directed that it undertake a review of the minimum pension contribution levels by employees and employers for lay employees, to report back to the 2018 Conference.

Memorial M18 Conference 2016 – Employer-only Pension Contributions for Lay Employees

The Nottingham (South) (22/2) Circuit Meeting (Present: 24; Voting: unanimous) calls upon the Conference to urgently review its decision of 1999 regarding contributions to a pension scheme for both employer and lay employees. It notes that the changing landscape of pensions legislation, the issues of auto-enrolment and employer debt liability upon withdrawal from a scheme (a cessation event) cause this Circuit, and possibly others more generally, great difficulty in managing the costs of involvement in a pension scheme. It therefore asks the Conference to permit Methodist Church employing bodies to enter into employer-only contribution arrangements where employees have exercised their right not to opt in or to join a pension scheme and as a result the employer is, either immediately or in the foreseeable future, at risk of incurring a cessation event liability.

Reply

The Conference thanks the Nottingham (South) Circuit Meeting and refers its memorial to the Methodist Council to be considered as part of the review set up in response to memorial M17.

The Finance Sub-committee (FSC) has no formal role in this process, but was asked for its considered views on the pensions memorial at its meeting on 16 November 2016. The FSC considered a range of options and recommended that the employer level should remain as a minimum of 6% of salary, and that employees should be offered choices, with a minimum level of contribution from them of 2%.

The Finance Sub-committee wanted to remind employing bodies that they should encourage employees to think carefully about pension provision and the impact of the choices that they take; particularly for young employees who should be encouraged to start saving for a pension as early in their working life as possible.

Auto-enrolment legislation means that the minimum total contributions will significantly increase from 2018 onwards. The minimum combined employee/employer contribution increases to 5% in April 2018, the year that the Conference receives this report, so any proposed change to the policy would need to conform to that level.

Memorial M17 accepts that these contribution levels will not provide a very substantial pension, but assumes that it will 'hopefully' set people on a path to making a more adequate provision at a later date.' This assumption is possibly inaccurate as it puts the onus on the employee, rather than the employer, to save for their pension at an elusive date, which may never arrive.

Memorial M18's request to permit Methodist Church employing bodies to enter into employer-only contribution arrangements, where employees have exercised their right not to opt in or to join a pension scheme is contrary both to the spirit of auto-enrolment legislation, and the Church's stance regarding responsible employment. It is designed purely to protect employing bodies in the small number of cases where they could potentially be subject to a debt arising from an employment cessation event. It is not therefore appropriate for the Conference to offer such an option; rather the focus should be on employing bodies encouraging pension participation as widely as possible.

The Council makes the following recommendations:
The Council recommends to the Conference that the employer level for pension contribution should remain as a minimum of 6% of salary, however employees should be offered choices, with a minimum level of contribution from them of 2%, to apply to all employees appointed after 1 September 2017.

The Council recommends that local employers should offer any of their employees that have opted out at 6% the chance to now be enrolled at a level between 2% and 6%.

The Council recommends that local employers should not be allowed to offer these new arrangements to existing employees that are already contributing at the current level of 6%.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

3/9. The Conference received the Report.

3/10. The Conference in making its further reply to M17 and M18 (2016) directed that:

(a) the employer level for pension contribution should remain as a minimum of 6% of salary;
(b) employees should be offered choices, with a minimum level of contribution from them of 2%, to apply to all employees appointed after 1 September 2017;
(c) local employers should offer any of their employees that have opted out of contributions at 6% the chance to now be enrolled at a level between 2% and 6%;
(d) local employers should not be allowed to offer these new arrangements to existing employees that are already contributing at the current level of 6%.

SECTION G
M14 (2016) SUPPORT FOR CIRCUIT STEWARDS

The Aire and Calder (16/17) Circuit Meeting (Present: 92; Voting: 88 for, 0 against) draws the attention of the Conference to the responsibilities carried by circuit stewards.

The Aire and Calder Circuit was formed in 2011 through the bringing together of four Circuits. The new and significantly enlarged Circuit of 32 churches and over 1,500 members makes increasing demands upon the eight circuit stewards. Alongside the superintendent minister and the rest of the circuit staff, the Circuit is dependent on their skills, enthusiasm, insights and initiatives for the Circuit's governance, strategic development and mission focus. Circuit stewards provide Circuits with their most senior lay leadership yet, in many Circuits, the recruitment of circuit stewards with the skills and time to give to the role is becoming more difficult to secure. However, without this lay leadership Circuits could not function as intended and a very different form of leadership would be required to ensure the survival of the circuit system.

Apart from the considerable flow of helpful information that comes to circuit treasurers from the Financial Services department of the Connexional Team, together with the equally helpful section, 'Managing Trustees and Methodist Money' within the Church's website, in our view circuit stewards receive only minimal support from the Connexional Team either in the form of training, systematic communication or encouragement. We believe this situation needs to change. The Circuit proposes that the Secretary of the Conference and the Methodist Council:
(a) develop an appropriate connexionally agreed training and support system for circuit stewards;
(b) develop a direct line of communication between the Secretary of the Conference and circuit stewards so that circuit stewards are kept up to date with significant policy, strategy and good practice development in the Methodist Church, in particular as Conference decisions affect the life of Circuits.

Reply
The Conference welcomes the memorial from the Aire and Calder Circuit Meeting regarding the duties and responsibilities of circuit stewards. The Conference particularly wishes to note and affirm the contribution and dedication of circuit stewards as senior lay leaders within the life of the Methodist Church. The Conference notes work currently under way on the redesign of circuit steward training in the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network which will be piloted during the next connexional year. The Conference also notes and wishes to encourage the practice in some Districts of gathering together groups of circuit stewards for mutual learning, sharing and support. The memorial raises some important issues about communication and the Conference therefore directs the Methodist Council to identify appropriate mechanisms for regular communication with circuit stewards on policy, strategy and good practice.

The Council noted that learning and development support for circuit stewards is currently ad hoc with huge variations between individual Circuits and Districts. Whilst there are a number of examples of good practice, and development and learning provision for circuit stewards is available across the DMLN regions, there is at present no connexion wide scheme for the training and support of circuit stewards. The Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network is currently nearing completion of work on a new scheme which will be piloted in the first half of 2017 and introduced as a connexional resource in September 2017.

The scheme will have a number of resources aimed at preparing people for the role of circuit steward and has the following outcomes:
By the end of the programme, learners will be able to:

- be confident in their calling and in the main aspects of their role
- demonstrate an understanding of *Our Calling* and the calling and structures of the Methodist Church
- demonstrate an understanding of their role in the context of the Circuit and the structures of the wider Methodist Church

- be able to work in collaboration with ordained colleagues in exercising pastoral and missional leadership in relation to the whole life of the Circuit
- understand their main duties within the context of the *Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church (CPD)* and demonstrate a working knowledge of the Standing Orders relevant to their role
- develop as a visible community of stewards, recognisably skilled, resourced and respected.

In addition, a *Circuit Steward's Handbook* is being developed, available both as a PDF and in a flexible format for use as a resource locally, and a range of learning resources which circuits can draw upon according to their particular circumstances. Officers are also currently exploring the possibility of programmes of advocacy and support for circuit stewards at district and regional levels, building upon existing good practice in some parts of the Connexion.

Work is underway in consultation with district Property Secretaries revising the online Property Handbook. Updated sections will be highlighted in the quarterly Property Matters e-newsletter, which provides and promotes a range of resources for property secretaries across the Connexion.

The Standard Form of Accounts provides a consistent template to treasurers for the preparation of accounts – it and the associated guidance are updated annually by the Team under the oversight of the Accountancy Support Group. Implementation of the new charity Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) was supported by training offered, particularly to district and circuit treasurers, during 2016 at several locations around the Connexion.

The annual Resourcing Mission Forum helps officers at district and circuit level to think about how they can most effectively exercise stewardship of resources of people, property and money in pursuing God's mission; feeding into the work of church and circuit stewards.

*****RESOLUTION**
3/11. The Conference received the Report as a further reply to M14 (2016).

SECTION H
EDI REPRESENTATION AT THE CONFERENCE

The Council noted that under Standing Order 102(i)(g) there shall be six persons representing the concerns of racial justice at the Methodist Conference. Since 2015 the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee has had the responsibility for identifying those representatives and analysing and monitoring the impact.

Though not formally designated as such; the allocation of the six persons representing the concerns of racial justice could be seen as a 'positive action' initiative under the Equality Act 2010 and antecedent Race Relations legislation because, in practice apart from the 2016 Conference, only individuals who are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) have been in these roles and their presence has helped to ensure the diversity of the representatives at the Conference.

However, the Council heard from the EDI Committee that this sole focus on ethnicity skews the ethnicity data for the Conference and could be seen as masking the challenges it faces in regards to inclusivity.

The EDI Committee considered the following information:
Apart from the 2016 Conference where the EDI Committee decided to contact Districts directly to identify nominees for the six places; over the past five years most of those representing the concerns of racial justice at the Methodist Conference came from the same pool of people. It could therefore be argued that if this was a positive action initiative then the impact for BAME individuals

has been limited. Also, the focus on racial justice as a connexional process may have inadvertently hindered some Districts identifying BAME individuals as part of their district elections.

The EDI Committee therefore recommended to the Council that, rather than only focusing on a BAME presence at the Conference, the most effective use of Standing Order 102(i)(g) is to focus on the wider question of diversity and inclusion at the Conference which affects a number of protected groups and the EDI Committee will continue to support the Methodist Council in progressing this. The Council recommends that four out of the six allocated places be designated as persons representing the concerns of equality diversity and inclusion.

However, the Council recognises the importance of racial justice in its own right and therefore recommends that two of the six roles should continue to be concerned with racial justice.

In recommending the amendment of Standing Order 102(i)(g), the EDI Committee is signalling that the issue of diversity and inclusion at the Methodist Conference is a mainstream issue rather than an issue that is only pertinent for protected groups.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

3/12. The Conference received the Report.

3/13. **The Conference amended Standing Order 102(i)(g) as follows**:
Six persons representing the concerns of ~~racial justice~~ **equality, diversity and inclusion, at least two of whom shall represent the concerns of racial justice and** at least two of whom shall be under the age of 26 **at the date fixed for the commencement of the Conference.**

SECTION I
MINISTERIAL CODE OF CONDUCT

BACKGROUND

1. The Council received a draft of a Ministerial Code of Conduct at its meeting in January 2017. It discussed it with enthusiasm and made many helpful comments which have been incorporated into the version that follows. The Council recommended that there be widespread discussion of it throughout the Connexion. It was noted that as part of that process there would have to be formal consultation with the Faith and Order Committee and the Law and Polity Committee, not least about whether there should be formal reference to the Code in Standing Orders, and, if there should, what form it should take. The Representative Session of the Conference is therefore invited to direct that there be a period of consultation about it, and that a report of the results be brought to a future Conference. In advance of any debate on that formal resolution, the Presbyteral Session is invited to engage in a pastoral discussion of the draft.

2. The Code of Conduct Working Party was established to address recommendation 8 of the report to the 2015 Conference of the Past Cases Review, *Courage, Cost and Hope*: "That serious consideration be given to producing a Code of Conduct for ministers along the lines of that produced by the Church of England", but also recognising that other groups and officers were looking at the same issues from other perspectives.

3. The membership of the working party therefore developed over the two year period from the 2015 Conference. Initially a Professional Conduct Working Party met to review a considerable amount of material produced by other bodies, including *Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy* (from the Church of England), and from within our own tradition. This group was then brought together with members of the Connexional Leaders' Forum, the Conference Office and the Discipleship and Ministries cluster who were working in related areas.

4. The final membership of the group was Ms Janet Arthur, Deacon Eunice Attwood, the Revds Kenneth Howcroft (Chair), Dr Jennifer Hurd, Dr Jonathan Hustler, Paul Martin, Mrs Christine Parker and the Revds Julian Pursehouse and Paul Wood. Ms Gill Dascombe was a member of the group in its early stages, and input was received from the Revd Diane Clutterbuck speaking on behalf of the group working on the introduction of supervision.

5. Over the course of its meetings and electronic consultation between meetings, the working party established a number of fundamental points of agreement:

   - That a code is necessary in order to articulate the accountability of ministers in a single, agreed, and authoritative document.

   - That objections to the code on the basis that it is contrary to our custom or identity as Methodists are unfounded. The expectation of appropriate conduct and accountability that the code will explicate is deeply embedded in our tradition.

   - That the code therefore needs to bring together the decisions that the Conference has already made (as set out in Standing Orders and the Guidance section of *Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church* and any other relevant resolutions) in terms of ministers' accountability for the way in which they live out their vocation. Appended to the code, therefore, is an index of existing guidelines and other materials.

   - That the code should have an aspirational tone (ie it should offer a call to excellence in ministerial practice and behaviour), but also provide a set of tools with which (in)appropriate conduct and (in)competence can be identified and assessed.

   - That the code needs to be closely related to the recommendation of the Past Cases Review that ministers work under supervision.

   - That ministry is not exercised individualistically nor in isolation from others (lay or ordained) in the life of the Church. The code needs to make clear that there are expectations of particular groups in the life of the Church (eg circuit staff meetings).

   - That the code is for ordained ministers; and that the shared nature of ministry is best expressed by there being a single code with occasional notes to clarify any differences in expectations for deacons/presbyters.

   - That the code needs to be related to the competencies being produced for those at various stages of ministry which will be based on the criteria for selection approved by the 2016 Conference.

   - That in order to be effective the code needs to be relatively concise; and that the above points need to be explicit in its introduction.

   These points were shared with the Past Cases Review Implementation Group at its meeting in November 2016.

6. These fundamental points of agreement provided a basis for the structure for the Code. The introductory narrative outlines the rationale, demonstrating that the central concept of 'watching over one another in love' is embedded in our tradition, and arguing that the Code makes explicit much that is already part of our practice. The Code is then presented in three parts, drawing on the understanding in the 2002 report *Releasing Ministers for Ministry* that there is a 'constant interaction in each minister's life between his or her office, being, and functioning.' The 'Office' grounds the Code in the foundational ecclesial and vocational

statements of the Church about ministry (eg the Ordinal) and expresses the role within the life of the Church to which the individual is called. ‘Being’ indicates the internalised values of a minister as she or he is formed to fulfil the ‘Office’, and draws on the *Criteria for Selection for Ordained Ministry* which were approved by the Conference in 2016 (and which give the Code its nine sections). ‘Function’ sets out in bullet points benchmarks of excellence for ways in which the implications of ‘Office’ and ‘Being’ are embodied in the particular tasks and practice of ministry.

7. The Council noted the Working Party’s belief that any code eventually adopted should be subject to regular review by the Ministries Committee.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

3/14. The Conference received the Report.

3/15. The Conference commended the draft code for wide consultation across the Connexion.

A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR METHODIST MINISTERS

1. “Watching over one another in love” is the traditional hallmark of the Methodist experience and understanding of discipleship. It involves a free-will commitment to share in the discerning of God’s Spirit at work in the world through conferring with others, and a gracious offering of oneself to give and receive the fruits of that discernment so that all may grow in holiness (personal and social) and engage in worship and mission to the best of their ability.

2. In other words, it is the Methodist way of exercising oversight. It begins in the promises and commitments made in baptism, confirmation and becoming a member of the Methodist Church. Its classic expression spiritually is in the Covenant Service. Its classic embodiment practically is in Class and Band meetings (and their modern equivalents), and in the Conference (and its subsidiary meetings in Local Churches, Circuits, Districts and the wider Connexion).

3. The process of conferring and discerning always has to be open to the Spirit bringing new insights and fresh revelations of truth. But it also has to begin from somewhere; and it then needs to check that any apparent new insights that emerge are of God.

4. The primary starting point (or source of content) and checking point has always been the Bible. That is why the holiness being overseen is often termed ‘scriptural’ holiness. The first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures set out the Torah: the story of God’s creative ordering of the universe and guidelines for how to live in harmony with its principles (hence better translated as ‘instruction’ than ‘law’). The biblical prophets then constantly take those principles and re-contextualise them in the light of changing historical circumstances. Similarly, the New Testament shows the early church taking the teachings Jesus had given to his followers who were predominately Galileans, Jerusalemites or other people “of the land”, and re-applying them to Greek-speaking Jews from the diaspora, Samaritans and Gentiles throughout the Roman world.

5. Early Methodism, as the name suggests, developed its own method of pursuing holiness in worship and mission. That method involved developing guidelines, and setting out aspirations and expectations, which applied the insights of scripture to the lives of the people. These were often termed ‘rules’, not in the sense of a legal code of commandments but of recommended standards for living and touchstones for reflection.

6. It is as if, in emphasising “watching over one another in love”, Wesley saw the process of living by Rule as a means of grace. He defined ‘means of grace’ as *“outward signs, words, or actions, ordained of God, and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby He might convey to [sc human beings] preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace”*. He then immediately

went on to quote the *Book of Common Prayer*'s phrase, "the means of grace and the hope of glory" before summarising the *Book of Common Prayer*'s definition of sacraments as "an outward sign of inward grace, and a means whereby we receive the same"[1].

7. Predominant among these rules for the early Methodists were *The Character of a Methodist* (1742), *the Nature, Design and General Rules of the United Societies* (which included the rules for the Class Meeting) (1743); and *the Rules of the Bands* (1744).

8. Within the general calling of all the "people called Methodist" to "live by Rule", there were focused callings and Rules for those performing particular functions (eg "the Rules for Singing") or fulfilling particular offices. Of particular relevance for our current concerns are the group of Anglican priests and lay preachers that Wesley began to gather around him as his itinerant "Helpers" or "Assistants", and with whom he held Conference. Over the years, and particularly as Methodism began to develop from being a movement within the Church of England to being a Church (and then Churches) in its own right, this group gradually developed into an order of ministers.

9. Wesley's *Twelve Rules of a Helper* (1753, being a revised version of the *Rules of an Assistant* 1744) are therefore very important. They are clearly a Rule of Life. They are equally clearly a Code of Conduct.

10. The *Twelve Rules* and other sections relating to the office of Preachers and Pastors were among the material included in the compilations of the Minutes of the Conference that were known as the *Large Minutes* and revised and re-issued in 1753, 1763, 1770, 1772, 1780, and 1789. A copy of the *Large Minutes* or J S Simon's *Summary of Methodist Law and Discipline* which superseded them in 1905 was given to all those preachers and helpers who were received into full connexion with the Wesleyan Conference in the late 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. The inscription in them (which persisted until Methodist Union in 1932) said "As long as you freely consent to, and earnestly endeavour to walk by, these Rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow-labourer".

11. Further material was created in 1820 in what became known as the *Liverpool Minutes*. It was intended to supplement the *Twelve Rules of a Helper* and those other parts of the *Large Minutes* which related to the duties of Preachers and Pastors. It stated that both those documents should be read frequently and studied carefully. The new material was intended to re-apply their principles in the changed circumstances of "the present age" in the first quarter of the 19th century, which included the first recorded reduction in membership of Wesleyan Methodism (although Primitive Methodism was growing exponentially in the same period, particularly in the Midlands). The results were a set of resolutions to which those in full connexion with the Conference committed themselves, with a view to achieving "… the increase of Spiritual Religion among our Societies and Congregations, and … the extension of the work of God in our native country". They too set out guidelines, and criteria by which performance could be supervised and evaluated.

12. These resolutions in the *Liverpool Minutes* were revised in 1885, and remained for many years as a blueprint for ministry. A new set of *Resolutions on Pastoral Work* was then adopted by

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[1] *Standard Sermons number XII* (number 16 in the more recent edition by Outler). In the same sermon Wesley identified the chief of these means of grace as prayer (individual and communal); searching the Scriptures (by reading, hearing and meditating on them); and receiving the Lord's Supper (regularly, and as often as possible). In the Minutes of the 1744 Conference, Wesley added two further ones: fasting; and Christian Conference (which we have more recently termed Christian Conferring). These five things Wesley sometimes called the 'Institutional Means of Grace', in that he found scriptural warrant for them. But he also recognised other things which he called 'Prudential Means of Grace'. These, by their very definition, could vary according to the people, contexts and situations concerned; but they were always directed towards *"watching, denying ourselves, taking up our cross, exercise of the presence of God"*. They included following particular rules of life or engaging in particular acts of holy living.

the Conference in 1971. This occurred in a period when the context for ministry was changing rapidly, leading to a series of theological restatements of the nature of ordained ministry. In 1960 there had been a statement on *Ordination in the Methodist Church* which was grounded in the major 1937 statement *The Nature of the Christian Church.* There then followed reconsiderations of ordained ministry. Some were prompted by ecumenical considerations in such as the *Anglican-Methodist Conversations.* Others came in response to pressure to diversify the contexts in which ministry was exercised so that, for example, it could be exercised in what were known as the 'sectors' as well as traditional circuit appointments. This led to the 1974 statement on *Ordination*.

13. Throughout all this period, and since, the important dynamic of "watching over one another in love" in ministry, and in exercising accountability and receiving support for it, has been expressed through weekly staff meetings; the response to the question asked during a communion service at the Presbyteral Session of each District Synod ("Does each of us continue faithfully to discharge the obligations laid upon us by the ministry which we have received from the Lord Jesus to testify to the gospel of the grace of God? Do we continue to believe and preach our doctrines and administer our discipline?"); and the answer of each District in the Presbyteral Session of the Conference to the Annual Inquiry about the character and discipline of presbyters and presbyteral probationers.

14. The whole process has been summed up in the Ordinal for Presbyters in the 1999 Methodist Worship Book. After outlining a number of tasks of presbyteral ministry under the heading "In God's name you are to…" it goes on to say, "These things are your common duty and delight. In them you are to watch over one another in love."

15. Since the 1974 statement on *Ordination,* however, the Methodist Church has also closed the Wesley Deaconess Order, opened a Methodist Diaconal Order for both men and women, and declared that Order to be an order of ministry in the Church as well as a form of dispersed religious order. Although there are differences of emphasis between it and the presbyteral order (as two complementary orders of ministry) it inherits and shares the same tradition concerning rules of life, codes of conduct and "watching over one another in love". The Methodist Diaconal Order has a clear (or specific) expectation and practice in these matters articulated in the sharing of a common rule of life. The declaration in the diaconal ordination service states that "You are to share fully in the life of your Order and to keep its discipline". The sense of "watching over one another in love" is enacted in the area groups and through the Order's Convocation. The annual inquiry as to the character and discipline of deacons and diaconal probationers is conducted through a rededication service at the Convocation, and assurances then given by the Warden of the Order on behalf of the Convocation to the Conference Diaconal Committee and, thereby, the Conference.

16. In the same period since 1974, the diversification in the ways that both presbyteral and diaconal ministry have been expressed has also posed questions about what commonality there could be within each order as well as between them, when, for example, not everyone could be in a weekly staff meeting, and also when the criteria for discernment of ministerial vocation were no longer self-evidently appropriate for all contexts. That led eventually to the report *What is a Presbyter?* adopted by the Conference in 2002, and *What is a Deacon?* in 2004. The former restates the definitive characteristic emphases of presbyteral ministry. It then concludes with three sections outlining 'the Characteristics of a Presbyter', 'the Tasks of a Presbyter' and 'the Accountability of a Presbyter' (to God, to the Church, to ordained colleagues and to others).

17. In recent years attention has been given to identifying criteria of competence and standards of practice, so that they can be used by the Church and its ministers in the process of discernment. The 2003 Conference approved *Criteria for the Selection of Candidates for Ordained Ministry* which were revised by the 2016 Conference. Attention has also been given to the tasks of ministry and in 2002 the Conference adopted the report *Releasing Ministers for*

Ministry. That report identified the need to discuss the life of the minister in three ways – the Office to which the minister is called (as presbyter or deacon) which has a fundamental character the main features of which are expressed in the words of the Ordinal; the Being of the minister, which we understand to mean the *habitus* by which the presbyter or deacon lives out her or his calling; the Functioning of the minister, ie the way in which the minister's being manifests itself in the tasks of ministry.

18. It is to that last category that the stipulations of the Code of Conduct need to apply. In order to be clear that the Code relates to our fundamental understanding of what it is to be a presbyter or deacon, the *Code* is laid out according to the revised *Criteria for Selection* and the three dimensions identified in *Releasing Ministers for Ministry.* None of this will appear unfamiliar to the presbyter or deacon who has nurtured her or his vocation and been faithful in watching over and being watched over in love. *What is a Presbyter?* reminded the Church that ministers are expected to behave "with integrity, competence and according to the best standards of practice towards those to whom she or he ministers."

19. The *Code* therefore will remind ministers of the exemplary standards of behaviour which befit their calling as representative people. Occasionally, of course, ministers fail to live out their calling in the way that the Church reasonably expects them to do. Those who engage with such ministers in the processes of supervision approved by the Church, those who otherwise have oversight of them, and those who are recipients of their ministry, should find in the *Code* a canon against which (in)appropriate conduct and (in)competence can be identified and assessed. However, the *Code* should be seen primarily as aspirational; its purpose is not to incite guilt in the practitioner but to assist in the reasoned review of self and practice which is part of living and working accountably.

20. The commitment to be supervised is a key element of the *Code*. This means that the *Code* is integral to the processes of Ministerial Development Review as the agreed records of supervision which will be available to those involved in MDR will identify those areas that have been addressed which will themselves relate to (and be informed by) the *Code.*

Draft Code of Conduct

	The Office	Being	Functioning
Vocation (call and commitment)	'It is the universal conviction of the Methodist people that the office of Christian ministry depends upon the call of God'.[2] Throughout the process of candidating and training, men and women are tested on their call and asked if they remain persuaded that God has called them to ordained ministry in the Church. That call to ordained ministry is a particular expression of the vocation to discipleship which is shared by all members of the Church. Those ordained as presbyters and deacons 'focus, express, and enable the ministry of the whole people of God.'[3]	Presbyters and deacons are people who witness to a sense of a distinct call to serve in the ministry to which they are ordained; and who are aware of the need continually to ask to what they are being called and to test the development of their call with others in the Church. They live with a conviction that for them the call to be a presbyter or deacon is part of and indispensable to the call to holiness which is common to all disciples but which finds different expression in each; this vocation however is not individualistic but is tested and affirmed by the community of disciples. Ministers therefore seek to discern their developing vocation (eg, at times of stationing) in dialogue with the Church and its processes.	All ministers should demonstrate: • a willingness to give an account of the call to minister; • preparedness to explore the developing sense of call with others (eg, spiritual director, minister exercising oversight, supervisor); • commitment to affirm each year a continued sense of call to the ordained ministry of Christ's Church; • a recognition that the call to minister is discerned by the individual and by the Church together: and therefore • a commitment to listen carefully to the narratives of vocation that others have to offer; • a recognition that their own vocation needs constantly to be reviewed in the light of the Church's needs in serving God's mission in the world; • obedience and commitment to the Church's processes of discernment and stationing.
Vocation (ministry in the MCB)	Whilst the Methodist Church claims to ordain 'not to a denomination, but to the presbyterate and diaconate of the One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church', Methodist presbyters and deacons	Deacons are people whose calling is to focus a servant ministry on behalf of the whole Church by enabling the ministry of others. They are required to live according to the Diaconal Order's *Rule of Life.*	• A commitment to work collaboratively with all other members of the Church (presbyters and deacons, lay officers and lay members). • Participation (as required by Standing Orders) in regular Circuit staff meetings (or equivalent

[2] Deed of Union cl4
[3]*What is a Presbyter?* paragraph 4.

	exercise ministry within and as representatives of the Methodist Church in Britain. This representative ministry is conducted alongside and in partnership with Christians of other denominations with whom the Methodist Church in Britain is commited to work for a fuller expression of God-given unity.	Presbyters are called to a "principal and directing part" in the life of the Church through the ministry of word, sacrament, and pastoral responsibility. All ministers are called to work with colleagues from other denominations in a way which honours the others' positions whilst maintaining their own identity as Methodist.	body) as an expression of collegiality and shared leadership. • A respect for the significance and integrity of the ministry of the other order, and of lay officers and members. • An understanding and appropriate use of the power implicit in the role of minister and an acceptance of accountability for the exercise of the office. • For presbyters, a commitment to 'watch over one another in love' through attendance at and participation in the Synod and through less formal gatherings. • For deacons, a commitment to life as members of the Methodist Diaconal Order • A recognition that the conduct of the minister at all times should be that of a representative of the Methodist Church. • A commitment to work with ecumenical colleagues in a spirit of trust and openness.
Relationship with God	Presbyters and deacons are first and foremost people of prayer. Presbyters and deacons commit themselves at ordination to 'be faithful in worship, in prayer, [and] in the reading of the Holy Scriptures.'[4]	Ministers need to nurture a spiritual life that is authentic and disciplined and which is based on a confidence in God's love for them and a sense of the call to perfect holiness. This spiritual life will be manifest in regular engagement with the means of grace in private devotion and in the life of the worshipping community. As for all Methodist disciples, this will include participation in public worship, regular communion, and prayer and Bible study in small groups.	All ministers should have: • a regular and disciplined life of personal prayer; • a commitment to the worship of the Church including times when they are not leading worship; • a form of accountability (eg, to a spiritual director) for their life of prayer. Deacons are in addition committed to the Daily Office of the Order and to its common rule of life.

[4] *Methodist Worship Book* p303/318

		Ministers need to be those who are able to receive as well as to give in worship, fellowship, pastoral care, and mission.	
Personality and character	'This ministry will make great demands upon you.'[5] The model is the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep. Therefore, the life of the ministers can be spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, and physically demanding. As those who live on the resources of the Church, freely shared by other disciples, ministers are those who are prepared to live within modest means whilst at the same time being called to demonstrate the generosity that imitates the generosity of Christ.	Ministers need to develop and to maintain the resources to face these demands, not least through living and working within the Church's policy that all ministers should operate under supervision. They need to understand their own limitations and vulnerability, and recognise their dependence on and experience of grace. They need to care for themselves, and to have the capacity to engage with and to work on areas of perceived weakness. Presbyters and deacons should live as those for whom the church has provided with a modesty that avoids both extravagance and parsimony. They should conduct their own financial affairs with probity and appropriate transparency. As representative people they are duty bound to demonstrate the care for the environment and conservation of the resources of the planet that expresses the Church's concern for the integrity of creation.	All ministers shall operate under the supervision policy of the church by: • meeting regularly with a supervisor; • sharing honestly with the supervisor the tensions and joys of their ministry; • making effective use of the supervisory space to reflect on their ministry with a view to improving their practice; • agreeing records of supervision; • accepting responsibility for the outcomes of supervision. All ministers should demonstrate a care for their own physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual well-being, through such as: • maintaining reasonable working hours; • taking regular days off and holidays; • seeking treatment and resting when unwell; • accepting the gift of the sabbatical at appropriate times. In terms of their income, all ministers should: • keep accurate records of all receipts of gifts or other monies in addition to their stipend, salary, or pension; • abide by the Church's policies in relation to occasional fees, gifts, and gratuities.

[5] *Methodist Worship Book* p302/317

			All ministers should be prudent in the use of material resources by: • careful management of their own finances and other means; • living in and taking care of the manse with which they are provided.[6]
Being in relationship with others	All ministry is relational and should reflect the loving communion of three persons that is God the Holy Trinity.[7] Both presbyters and deacons are called to have 'unfailing love' for those amongst whom they minister. Ministers are human beings who live in relationship with others and are expected to live in accordance with the church's policies and statements on marriage, family life, and other relationships. All ministers have other vocations (eg, to be spouses or partners, parents, children, siblings, friends, or neighbours) and are called prayerfully to balance their responsibilities to those close to them with the demands of their ministry in and on behalf of the Church.	Ministers need to recognise themselves as whole people who are called to balance the various commitments to those whom they are called to love. Ministers should be conversant with and live openly in accord with the guidelines on sexual relationships offered by the Conference in 1993. Presbyters and deacons should model good, wholesome, and loving relationships and demonstrate discretion in the use of physical contact or expressions of intimacy. The conduct of the minister should be that of a loving servant who is called to live among those whom she or he may find it easy or difficult to like. All human relationships have dimensions of power and vulnerability. Ministers should be alert to these and cautious of any words or actions that could be interpreted as an abuse of their power. Ministers need to be conversant with and to advocate for the Church's policies and practices in relation to the safeguarding of	All ministers should • live faithfully in their domestic situation; • be swift to seek help with and share with the minister exercising oversight serious difficulties in or likely breakup of their relationship; • be careful to identify and to maintain appropriate boundaries in pastoral relationships; • conduct all their pastoral work in accordance with the Church's directions in *With Integrity* and *Skill* and *Positive Working Together*; • be conversant with and follow the stipulations in the Church's Safeguarding policies about the conduct of pastoral work; • keep accurate and meaningful records of pastoral visits and encounters; • refer to supervision any relationship that might threaten to cross the boundaries of professional, pastoral care.

[6] Unless in exceptional circumstances permission has been given not to live in the manse.
[7] *What is a Deacon?* paragraph 2

		children and vulnerable adults.	
The Church's ministry in God's world	Ministers are called to lead God's people in mission to the world. They are those in whom gifts have been identified which contribute to the fulfilling of the mission of the Church. They are therefore those whose lives are shaped by the calling of the Church to worship, learning and caring, service, and evangelism and who seek to reflect theologically on the Church's vocation in the context of the 21st century.	All ministers (whether in circuit or other appointments or without appointment and in all aspects of their ministry) are called to work ecumenically to reflect the Methodist Church's understanding of the catholicity of the Church as God's instrument of mission in the world. Theological reflection is central to the life of the presbyter or deacon. He or she will seek to be informed about the world and to ask where God is at work. Within the broad understanding of what it means to be God's people in this place and time, each minister will develop his or her own theological and other interests and aim to contribute to the life and witness of the Church in particular ways, proclaiming the good news of God's love in ways that are appropriate to their context. Their political opinions should be informed by the use of reliable and authoritative media. It is wholly inappropriate for ministers to be members of any movements that implicitly or explicitly deny the equality of all God's children.	All ministers should seek to work ecumenically and should therefore: • develop partnerships with members of other churches working with the guidance of connexional and district officers as and when appropriate; • speak respectfully of Christians of other denominations and of members of other faith communities. All ministers should engage with social issues in ways that make clear Christ's compassion. Whilst ministers are free to hold and to express party political views they should avoid denigrating the opinions or motivations of others within the political mainstream. They should eschew language or attitudes that are in any way discriminatory or liable to incite hatred or inflame tensions.
Leadership and collaboration	The call to presbyteral ministry is a call to 'a principal and directing part in [the] great duties [of the Church]';[8] the call to the diaconate is to 'represent the	Ministers need to have an ability to work with others in a variety of ways. They should be those who work collaboratively with their lay and ordained colleagues in the leadership of	All ministers should (as set out in Standing Orders or as required in order to implement them): • attend and contribute to the meetings of which they are members;

[8] Deed of Union cl4

	servanthood of Christ, exercising a formal role of leadership in the Church'.[9] Both presbyters and deacons are called to 'accept our discipline and work together with… sisters and brothers in the Church'.[10] This requires an appropriate degree of both humility and confidence in the way in which leadership is exercised.	churches, circuits, or other bodies to which they are stationed. They should be able to delegate to others when appropriate. Ministry in the Methodist Church at times also requires the presbyter or deacon to be able to act decisively on the part of the church, circuit, or other body and therefore to hold an appropriate understanding of her or his own authority. *The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church* orders, regulates, and guides, the work of those who exercise leadership in the life of the Church and all presbyters and deacons are expected to be familiar with its contents. The covenant relationship is one in which the presbyter or deacon is called to represent the Conference within and beyond the Church. Particularly in the public arena, ministers should uphold the decisions of the Conference and express personal disagreement with those decisions in a manner which is collegial and respectful of the Conference and its officers, demonstrating 'a willingness to work with a dynamic tension of diversity, recognising that openness does not mean that 'anything goes' but is a desire to discern God's will in and for the other and the Church.'[11]	• participate in circuit staff meetings (or the equivalent body) as an expression of collegiality and shared leadership; • work with others to ensure that meetings in the life of the Church are properly constituted, effectively administered, and functionally efficient; • keep records of their own ministry and hold themselves accountable to their colleagues as appropriate; • chair and contribute to meetings in ways which clearly encourage all present to express opinions and model respectful listening; • consult (and act only in accordance with) the Standing Orders, Regulations, and Guidance contained in CPD when deciding on or implementing any course of action; • demonstrate a respect for the decisions of the Conference and the work of its officers; • encourage those with whom they share in ministry to help to implement the decisions of the Conference; • eschew words or actions that seek to undermine the authority of the Conference or to cast aspersions on the effectiveness or motivations of others who exercise leadership in the life of the Church; • observe appropriate codes of confidentiality adopted or recommended by the Conference or

[9] What is a Deacon? 7.3
[10] *MWB* p303, 318
[11] 'Living with Contradictory Convictions'

			otherwise approved by bodies authorised to act on its behalf.
Learning and understanding	Presbyters and deacons are required to undertake duties on behalf of the Church in which it is essential that they can explicitly and lucidly articulate the doctrines of the Christian faith to those who have received the gospel and to those who are yet to receive it. They are also required to engage in the practice of ministry which must be informed by an understanding of the great truths of the Faith and an ability to reflect theologically using a range of resources.	Presbyters and deacons should see themselves as lifelong learners who are constantly engaged in theological reflection. Their regular life should include dedicated times of study, engagement with Scripture and theological texts, and participation in study activities. It is recommended that all ministers identify their own theological interests and pursue them. Ministers should also explore and develop their interests in other avenues of knowledge. Presbyters and deacons will also be those who want to engage with a range of cultural pursuits and activities.	All ministers should: • have a programme of Bible reading; • maintain habits of study and avail themselves of the resources of the Church in developing their skills of theological reflection; • identify and pursue particular areas of theological and other study; • keep a record of their reading and engagements with other media, review it regularly and share the fruits of their learning appropriately with others in the church; • participate in the study opportunities offered by the Circuit, District, or Connexion when possible.
Communication	Much of ministry is concerned with speaking on behalf of God to people within and outside the Church. To articulate the truths of the Christian faith demands the skills of communication. Ministers are those who are constantly learning how to speak with clarity and passion about the Good News of Christ.	Ministers need to be aware of the different methods of communication that are available to them and of the importance of using different methods to speak to people with different learning styles and abilities. Ministers need to be alert to cultural differences and to those who do not find written or spoken English easy. Ministers should be aware of the opportunities and the perils of information technology and social media and be conversant with and careful about using modern methods of communication. Ministers should remember that whenever they communicate they do so as those who represent the Methodist Church and therefore be careful about what they say, the words that they use to say it,	All ministers should: • prioritise their communication skills in their professional development and seek regular feedback on their preaching and other forms of public communication; • be familiar with information technology and be prepared to communicate using it; • use words and language appropriate to each particular audience; • avoid the use of any language or imagery (eg, blasphemous, racial or sexual terms) that would be found offensive; • be conversant with and abide by the Church's guidance on the use of social media; • not use pseudonyms or anonymity to say that which they would not be willing to publish over

		and how it might be repeated and interpreted.	their name; • avoid any association with printed, broadcast, or Internet material that has gratuitously sexual or violent content.

Index of existing guidelines and standards

1. **What are ministers expected to do/be?**

- The ordinal (*The Methodist Worship Book*, pp. 297-328)

- Clause 4 of the Deed of Union – www.methodist.org.uk/media/1841903/2483_conf_2015_cpd_vol_2.pdf (pp. 213-214)

- Criteria for the selection of candidates for ordained ministry (2003) – www.methodist.org.uk/media/1679593/dev-per-selection-criteriafor-ordained-ministry-19062012.pdf (revised 2016: methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-2016-24-Methodist-Council-part-2.pdf)

- Expected competencies at the point of stationing and ordination (found in the *Handbook for Ministerial Probation* – methodist.org.uk/media/1767780/handbook-for-probation-2015.pdf)

- The Methodist Diaconal Order Rule of Life – www.methodist.org.uk/media/1841903/2483_conf_2015_cpd_vol_2.pdf (pp. 743-744)

- *Ordination* (1974) – www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/Faith_and_Order_Statements_Vol1_0409.pdf (beginning on p. 108)

- *The Ministry of the People of God* (1988) – www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/Faith_and_Order_Statements_Vol2_Part1_0409.pdf (beginning on p. 229)

- *The Methodist Diaconal Order* (1993) – www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/Faith_and_Order_Statements_Vol2_Part1_0409.pdf (beginning on p. 291)

- *Called to Love and Praise* (1999) – www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-called-to-love-and-praise-1999.pdf

- *Releasing Ministers for Ministry* (2002) - www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-releasing-ministers-for-ministry-2002.pdf

- *What is a Presbyter?* (2002) – www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-what-is-a-presbyter-2002.pdf

- *What is a Deacon?* (2004) – www.methodist.org.uk/media/879666/dev-perwhat-is-a-deacon-2004-15062012.pdf

- *The Nature of Oversight* (2005) – www.methodist.org.uk/conference/conference-reports/2005-reports

- *The Covenant Relationship for those who are Ordained and in Full Connexion* (2008) – methodist.org.uk/conference/conference-reports/2008-reports

2. How are they expected to do / be this?

- With regard to ways of working: *Flexible Patterns of Ministry* (1999) – www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-flexible-patterns-of-ministry-1999.pdf

- With regard to confidentiality: *With Integrity and Skill* (2008) – www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/Conf08_18_With_Integrity_and_Skill.pdf

- With regard to development: Ministerial Development Review – www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/leadership-and-ministry/ministerial-development-review

- With regard to conflict and positive working together – www.methodist.org.uk/media/1726656/positive-working-together-long-report-0615.pdf

- With regard to online presence and behaviour: Social media guidelines – www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/technology-and-church/social-media-guidelines

- With regard to Safeguarding: Policy (www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/safeguarding/methodist-safeguarding-policy) plus the learning and recommendations from the Past Cases Review (2015) (www.methodist.org.uk/media/1683823/past-cases-review-2013-2015-final.pdf)

3. Guidelines and standards regulating the life of the Church as a whole

- Legislation (eg the Equality Act 2010 – www.methodist.org.uk/ministers-and-office-holders/equality-and-diversity/legislation)

- Standing Orders (see 700 and 701 for ordained presbyteral and diaconal ministry) – www.methodist.org.uk/media/1841903/2483_conf_2015_cpd_vol_2.pdf