

## GUIDANCE

### Reporting a MERGER of two or more churches

- **District approval is needed for a Methodist Society to cease to be recognized as such and for its associated Church Council to be dissolved.** The relevant change of status of the Local Church then needs to be **reported via the Statistics for Mission site.**
- **In the case of a merger,** members continue to meet, but as part of a scheme whereby the Local Church has merged with one or more other churches: this may involve sharing a building, or meeting across more than one site (**multi-site society**).
- It does not necessarily mean that the **church building** is closed, but it does mean that the former individual society's membership and attendance statistics are included in the multi-society's aggregate returns. Therefore, from a statistical point of view, it has "closed" as separate membership and attendance statistics **no longer need to be reported.**

#### STEP 1: Notifying the Connexional Team

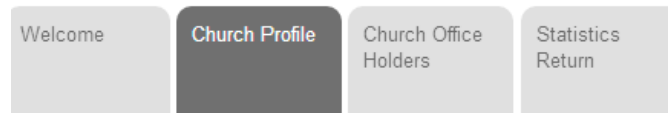
> STATISTICS FOR MISSION

- 1) Go to <https://online.methodist.org.uk>.

If you are not registered, you will need to click REGISTER and follow the instructions. If you are already a registered user, log in and select STATISTICS FOR MISSION.

- 2) Select your church via the **SELECT A CHURCH** button on the left-hand panel.

- 3) Go to the **CHURCH PROFILE** tab.



- 4) Scroll to the **REPORTING CHANGES** section and click the **REPORT CHANGED STATUS** button.

REPORT CHANGED STATUS

- 5) Select **MERGED** as type of closure from the pop-up box and enter the **DATE** of the status change.

A change of church status also requires a transfer of trusteeship. The Web Support Officer ([statisticsformission@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:statisticsformission@methodistchurch.org.uk)) will be able to assist with this.

Please select...  
 CLASS  
 CEASED  
 CEASED (LEP)  
**MERGED**  
 Please select... ▾

Statistical return before proceeding as otherwise the process

Select the most appropriate status from the list supplied.

You have the opportunity to enter **additional information** about the merger at this stage, such as the name and location of the merged society (**see STEP 2**).

- 6) When you have entered all the details, click **CONFIRM**.

An automated notification email is sent to the Web Support Officer.

**Please note:** this needs to be repeated for **all societies** involved in the merger.

## STEP 2: Data reconciliation

- **Basic details required to set up the merged church** (\*mandatory):
  - ✓ \*Church Name (also required if the name of one of the societies involved is used)
  - ✓ \*Primary Site (main worship site; if there isn't one, the sites are listed alphabetically)
  - ✓ Secondary Site(s) (all other worship sites in addition to the primary site)
  - ✓ \*Church Category (associated with the primary site's location)
  - ✓ Formation Date (as recorded by the district or circuit synod)
  - ✓ \*Pastoral Contact (only one main contact can be recorded)
  - ✓ Church website (if applicable – can be entered at a later stage)
  - ✓ Charity Number (if applicable – can be entered at a later stage)
  - ✓ LEP Details (i.e. whether SCLEP or in Covenanted Partnership)
- Each of the merging churches will need to complete the **final statistics** year as these figures will then provide the starting point for the new merged society. Remaining members should be marked as "transfers out"; these will then appear as "transfers in" in the starting record of the merged society.
- **All sites and all projects** from the formerly individual societies will be moved to the merged society unless otherwise advised.
- It is advisable to contact the [Finance Department](#) of the Connexional Team as a change of status has implications when submitting **Gift Aid**, for example.

## STEP 3: Web user access & data protection

### Web users

After the new society has been added to the database, web users' permissions will need to be updated as per the Superintendent's instructions.

- Managing Trustees: new permissions needed
- Circuit users: merged church covered by existing circuit-level access
- District users: merged church covered by existing district-level access

**Please note: It is important to ensure continued access for people who need it, and remove access for people whose responsibilities have changed or ceased in the new set-up.**

### Office holders

All office holders of the former individual societies will be transferred to the merged church unless otherwise advised.

**Please note: Under data protection rules, it is only permitted to retain contact details of people who hold an office within the Methodist Church.** Churches, circuits and districts must regularly review the accuracy of the information they hold and share with the Connexional Team via the WEB PROFILES section of the STATISTICS FOR MISSION part of the Online Suite.

## STEP 4: Online data entry and display of information

### Online Suite of Applications

The new church is required to submit statistical data and annual returns via the Online Suite of Applications as soon as the merger process is completed and the merged society has been added to the list of circuit churches.

### Webmap

The merged church should appear on the webmap in the week following its addition to the database.