

- 5/1 The Conference assembled at 9.15 and shared in worship.
- 5/2 **APPOINTMENT OF ATTESTORS**
- 5/2/1 Katharine Crew and Matthew C Collins were appointed to attest the Daily Record and related documents.
- 5/2/2 Carolyn Hothersall and The Revd Luke G S Smith were appointed to attest the Journal and related documents.
- 5/3 **FOURTH REPORT FROM THE CONFERENCE BUSINESS COMMITTEE**
- 5/3/1 The Business Committee reminds members of the Conference that, in order to submit a notice of motion, all signatures are required before the deadline for submission.
- The Conference Business Committee reports the following changes to the timetable of business: The closed session will now take place at 16:45 on Monday afternoon and not at 18:00 on Tuesday. Report 43 and Memorials M3 and M17 will be taken on Tuesday afternoon.
- The Law and Polity Conference Sub-committee has requested that Section K of the Methodist Council report (Minutes of the Conference and Directory) be removed from the *en bloc* list. The Business Committee has therefore scheduled this to be taken on Wednesday at 14:15.
- Memorial M21 will be taken on Tuesday afternoon rather than Wednesday.
- 5/3/2 The Conference adopted as Resolution B/2:
- The Conference receives the Report.
- 5/4 **3. METHODIST COUNCIL, PART 1, Sections E, G**
The Conference adopted Resolutions 3/7, 3/8, 3/11, 3/12 and 3/13.
- 5/5 **22. METHODIST COUNCIL, PART 2, Section S**
The Conference adopted Resolutions 22/20 and 22/21.
- 5/6 **3. METHODIST COUNCIL, PART 1, Section H**
- 5/6/1 The Conference adopted Resolution 3/14.
- 5/6/2 **Memorial M14**
The Conference received Memorial M14 and adopted as its reply that recommended by the Memorials Committee, the Memorial and the reply appearing on Agenda pp 655-656.
- 5/7 **22. METHODIST COUNCIL, PART 2, Sections T, O, P**
- 5/7/1 The Conference adopted Resolutions 22/22, 22/13, 22/14 and 22/15.

5/7/2

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE JUSTICE, DIGNITY AND SOLIDARITY SCRUTINY GROUP

The JDS Scrutiny Group has continued to meet together during 2022/2023 and has met on two occasions with the Secretary of the Conference. We hope that meetings after each Methodist Council can be arranged for the next connexional year with consideration given regarding the way forward from September 2024 as Oversight and Trusteeship proposals are firmed up. Two members of the group have also met with the Connexional Secretary in relation to the recruitment of a new staff member as the Implementation Officer moves to a new role to include project management. It is our hope that this will be advertised shortly as there will inevitably be a gap as recruitment has not yet happened. We want to acknowledge the work undertaken by both the Connexional EDI Adviser and the Implementation Officer and the members of the JDS Committee and thank them for their diligence and flexibility, particularly in the absence of both Co-Chairs of the JDS Committee during this year due to ill health and sabbatical time. In spite of these difficulties, significant progress has been made.

During this year we have also met with Sue Miller from the Susannah Wesley Foundation and with Ermal Kirby, the facilitator of the Transformation Task Group. Transformation was a key subject in both conversations. We hope that the Methodist Council during this year will be able to consider work on transformation in more depth as this is surely the way that the first aim of the JDS strategy “The Conference commits itself to systemic, structural and cultural change” can be achieved.

The members of the Scrutiny Group met last September with representatives of Mazars who undertook an EDI internal audit review. A number of things came out of that review which we and others had identified regarding the information which was being kept relating to implementing the JDS strategy. In particular that information was in places “incomplete and difficult to interpret”.

The JDS committee is committed to putting in place a detailed project plan to enable robust project management of the delivery of the JDS strategy. The project plan must identify action required, the individuals responsible for action, the resources required and dates for completion. We would expect regular reporting against the project plan, reasons for any missed dates explained and what remedial action is being taken.

The Scrutiny Group has worked with the EDI Adviser and Implementation Officer with input from members of the JDS Committee to develop and agree clearer, more detailed terms of reference for our group following that audit.

There is one area which both the audit and the work of the Committee have demonstrated needs to have some clear and urgent emphasis in this next phase of the strategy. This is data collection and monitoring. This would enable the Church to counter accusations of bias or organisational failings in relation to EDI matters where these are not actually the case or are exaggerated, and also to provide evidence of progress made as a result of the implementation of the strategy. For example, when it is publicly asserted that there are significant disproportions of certain categories in some areas of the Church’s life, it is difficult to refute those assertions without the data. It will be particularly important as new trusteeship and oversight structures are developed and consideration given to where connexional leadership is exercised to have the evidence that we can show that JDS matters have been considered and taken into account.

Given the significant changes proposed in the organisation of the Connexion, we commend the use of EDI impact assessments and look for assurance that JDS matters have been considered in all reports and reviews. The role of the JDS

committee will need to be clear as the committee structure and reporting lines are finalised.

As the Conference considers the reports before it we do have concerns about the proposal related to oversight and trusteeship that the JDS Committee report to the Mission Committee rather than the Connexional Council. One of our concerns as major reviews on areas such as Complaints and Discipline, Stationing and Nominations take place has been how we show consistency in how JDS matters are kept to the forefront in similar ways in different reviews. JDS matters will certainly be key in areas of ministries and resources as well as mission. It is also not clear how JDS matters can be brought up where decisions are made if there is no JDS Committee representation replacing that of the Co-Chairs being members of the Methodist Council. Alongside this concern the “hope” in the report on the composition of the Conference that a category for EDI concerns and the Youth Assembly will become unnecessary because the Districts, from their reduced number of representatives, may become more broadly representative, as a result of embedding the JDS strategy, does seem like a triumph of hope over experience. We will be looking to ask how these concerns are being met as the Oversight and Trusteeship work moves forward.

This year we have been particularly pleased to see the work on the Discrimination and Abuse Response Service and the Solidarity Circles get under way as well as the EDI training being taken up across the Connexion, albeit not necessarily in a uniform way. Progress is certainly being made on the implementation of the strategy but we cannot be complacent about the journey we still have to make.

Ruby Beech, Bala Gnanapragasam and John Robinson, JDS Scrutiny Group

- 5/7/3 The Conference adopted as Resolution 22/15A:
The Conference receives the Report.
- 5/7/4 **Memorials M18, M19**
The Conference received Memorials M18 and M19 and adopted as its replies those recommended by the Memorials Committee, the Memorials and the replies appearing on Agenda pp 659-661.
- 5/8 The Conference adjourned at 11.09.
- 5/9 The Conference reassembled at 11.40.
- 5/10 The Conference engaged in Bible study, led by Alison Ransome.
- 5/11 **58. PROPOSAL FOR A NEW DISTRICT IN NORTH WEST ENGLAND**
The Conference adopted Resolutions 58/1 and 58/2.
- 5/12 **22. METHODIST COUNCIL, PART 2, Sections R, U**
The Conference adopted Resolutions 22/18, 22/19, 22/23 and 22/24.
- 5/13 **7. ACTION FOR CHILDREN**
- 5/13/1 The Conference received a presentation by Paul Carberry and Jordan McCreery from Action for Children.
- 5/13/2 The Conference adopted Resolutions 7/1 and 7/2.

- 5/14 The Conference adjourned at 13.02.
- 5/15 The Conference reassembled at 14.15.
- 5/16 **22. METHODIST COUNCIL, PART 2, Section V**
The Conference adopted Resolution 22/25.
- 5/17 **24. UNIFIED STATEMENT OF CONNEXIONAL FINANCES**
The Conference adopted Resolution 24/1.
- 5/18 **11. CONNEXIONAL ALLOWANCES COMMITTEE**
- 5/18/1 The Conference adopted Resolutions 11/1, 11/2 and 11/3.
- 5/18/2 **Memorials M15, M16**
The Conference received Memorials M15 and M16 and adopted as its replies those recommended by the Memorials Committee, the Memorials and the replies appearing on Agenda pp 656-658.
- 5/19 **35. COMPOSITION OF THE CONFERENCE**
The Conference adopted Resolutions 35/1, 35/2 and 35/3,

p 449-451, Table at paragraph 10:
2024 column: Conference Elected, *for '7' reading '5'*,
and noting that the number of dual-qualified persons is not yet fully known
and therefore the number of members elected by Synods will be adjusted
accordingly, but will be at least 158
2025 column: noting that some figures are necessarily provisional at this
stage.
- 5/20 **12. A JUSTICE-SEEKING CHURCH: THE REPORT OF THE WALKING WITH MICAH PROJECT**
Rachel Lampard introduced this agenda item. The Conference engaged in discussion.
- 5/21 The Conference adjourned at 16.15.
- 5/22 The Conference reassembled in closed session at 16.45.
- 5/23 A report was presented to the Conference about a confidential inquiry regarding safeguarding processes.
- 5/24 A report was presented to the Conference by the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice regarding regulatory matters.
- 5/25 A report was presented to the Conference on behalf of the Convenors of Connexional Discipline and Appeal Committees regarding disciplinary processes concluded during the past year.
- 5/26 The Conference reassembled in open session at 17.18.
- 5/27 **DAILY RECORD**
- 5/27/1 The Daily Record of the Presbyteral Session on Thursday 22 June and Friday 23 June was presented, taken as read, and adopted,

at 2/13, for '47. OVERSIGHT AND TRUSTEESHIP' reading '57. OVERSIGHT AND TRUSTEESHIP'.

- 5/27/2 The Written Portion of the Daily Record of the Presbyteral Session was presented in headings only and adopted.
- 5/27/3 The Daily Record for Saturday 24 June and Sunday 25 June was presented, taken as read, and adopted.
- 5/28 **57. OVERSIGHT AND TRUSTEESHIP, Sections A, B, C**
- 5/28/1 The Conference adopted Resolutions 57/1 and 57/2.
- 5/28/2 The Conference adopted Resolution 57/3,

p 618, clause (4) of the proposed Standing Order
third line, for 'on-line' reading 'electronically'
- 5/28/3 The Conference, with the required majority, adopted Resolution 57/4.
- 5/28/4 The Conference adopted Resolution 57/6, noting the correction to p 618 above.
- 5/28/5 The Conference adopted Resolution 57/7.
- 5/28/6 **Notice of Motion 2023/101: Section C of the Oversight and Trusteeship Report**
The Conference recognises that it is important that the proposals for the establishment of the Connexional Council and its relationship with the Conference should command the confidence of the Methodist Church in Britain generally. The Conference therefore directs the Law and Polity Committee:

to consider and report to the Conference of 2024 on the questions (1) how any dispute between the Conference and the Connexional Council would be resolved and (2) how and in what circumstances members of the Connexional Council might be removed (whether or not in the event of such a dispute); and

to bring to that Conference any amendments to Standing Orders which the Committee recommends should be made in the light of the report.
- 5/28/7 The Conference adopted the Motion.
- 5/29 The Conference shared in worship, and adjourned at 18.24.
- 5/30 **LETTERS**
- 5/30/1 Letters of concern were sent in the name of the Conference to The Revd Dr David Hinchliffe, John Heard, The Revd Dr John McPake of the Church of Scotland, The Revd Lic Medarno Vedia Gutiérrez of la Iglesia Evangélica Metodista en Bolivia and Jeremias Nimo of la Iglesia Metodista de Guinea Ecuatorial.
- 5/30/2 A letter of condolence was sent in the name of the Conference to The Revd Colin Emerson.