

REVIEW OF DISTRICT GOVERNANCE REPORT TO APRIL 2021 SYNOD

As part of the *Simplifying Procedures* theme of *for such a time as this*, our strategy for resourcing mission, District Leadership Team has commissioned a review of the governance of the district itself. Proposals arising from this have been agreed by DLT. Key matters arising are being reported to representative synod:

- To propose a revised constitution of the membership of representative synod. Subject to approval by this synod, the revised constitution will be effective from September 2021
- To give advance notice of changes to district officers and committees. All district officers and members of committees are appointed annually by representative synod in September

These proposals aim for a district structure which is:

- Lean – reducing time spent on routine matters and removing duplication of effort
- Robust – with a diversity of voices and strong expertise integrated into decision-making
- Focussed on implementing *for such a time as this*
- Dynamic – responsive to changing circumstances

CONSTITUTION OF REPRESENTATIVE SYNOD

Constitution of representative synod is defined by Standing Order 410, which permits synods to make decisions about their membership within an overall framework.

It is proposed that from September 2021 the membership of our synod will be:

Members required by SO410:

1. The Vice President and all eligible ex-Vice Presidents of the Conference
2. All ministers and probationers stationed (or residing for the purposes of the stations) in the District and any other minister or probationer entered in the stations as a member of the Synod. This includes ministers of other churches with Recognised & Regarded status.
3. All members of the District Leading Team (includes Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer, Methodist Council Representative, Synod Secretary)
4. Lay Stationing Representative
5. Assistant Secretary of Synod
6. Two youth representatives, appointed at Dyference or other district youth gatherings
7. All eligible lay persons who are Conference-elected representatives to the Conference
8. Lay representatives to the next and last Conference

Additional members we choose to invite to make synod representative of the diversity of the district, and to ensure that significant activities of the district are represented:

9. Five persons elected by each circuit meeting, representing the diversity of the circuit. Of these one must be a lay employee and at least one must be a circuit steward. Circuits are encouraged to include representation from beyond their current leadership teams.
10. All District Officers mandated by Standing Orders not already included under other categories. These roles currently being:
 - a. Archivist
 - b. Missional Property Enabler (fulfilling the role of Property Secretary)

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- c. HR Officer (fulfilling the role of Lay Employment Advisor)
- d. Regional Candidates Panel Secretary (if a member within our district)
- e. Regional Complaints Support Convenor (if a member within our district)
- f. Regional Reconciliation Support Group Convenor (if a member within our district)
- g. Ecumenical Officers
- h. EDI Officer
- i. Probationers Secretary
- j. Worship & Preaching Secretary
- k. Disability Advisor
- l. HE Chaplaincy Co-ordinator
- m. Church Schools Officer

Lay people can only be voting members of synod if they are members of the Methodist Church or another Christian communion.

Impact of these changes

- The list of officers under section 10 includes some changes from the previous list of some district officers, which had over time become inconsistent. Officers mandated by Standing Orders is seen to be a straightforward definition which should remain consistent with the life of the district.
- The number of circuit-elected members was previously linked to circuit membership and so was liable to fluctuation as numbers varied. It is replaced by a stable and easily understood representation.

We will continue to extend invitation to attend representative synod meetings to people who are not voting members.

CHANGES TO DISTRICT OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

Proposed district officer and committee members will be presented to September representative synod for approval. These will include a smaller DLT, which will be renamed the District Leading Team, comprising:

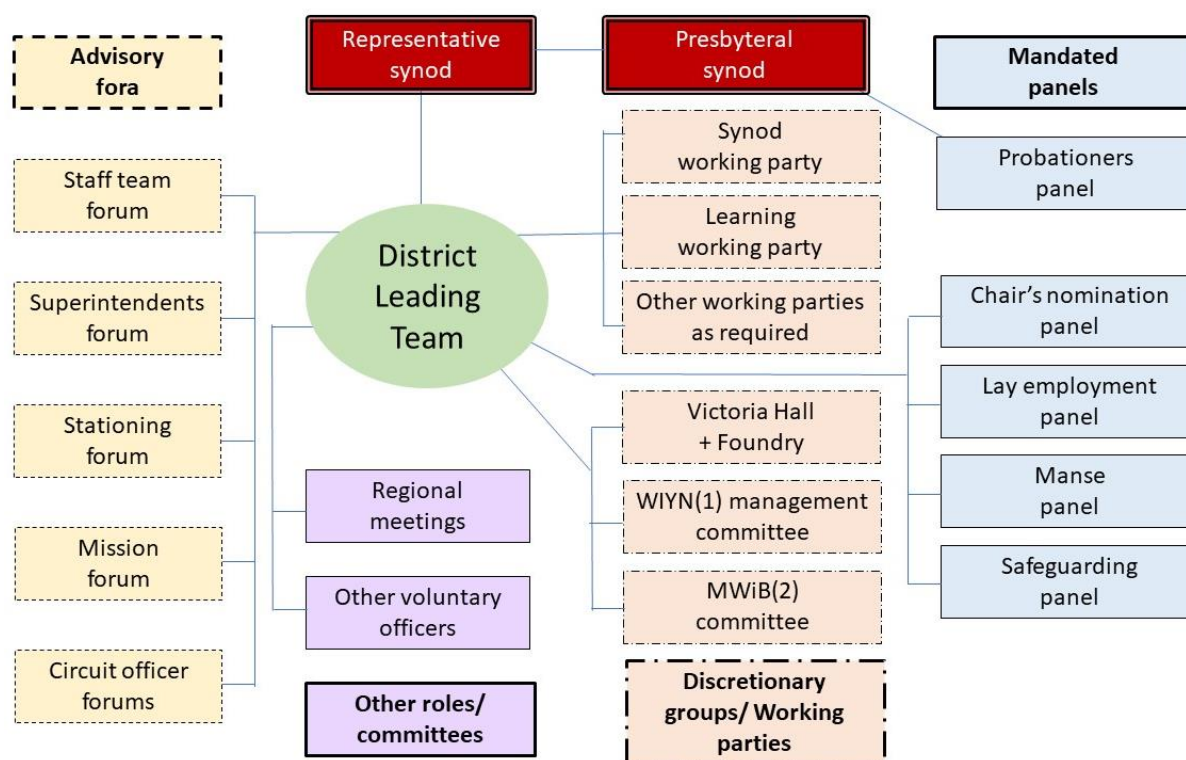
- Chair of District
- Synod Secretary
- Representative to Methodist Council
- Treasurer
- Deputy Chair of District
- Up to six other members bringing relevant skills and experience

Proposed members of the District Leadership Team will be determined over the summer by a small team appointed by the current District Leadership Team and overseen by the Chair/ Deputy Chair. Roles will be openly advertised with a description published of the skills and aptitudes required. Safer recruitment procedures will be followed.

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It is anticipated that this change to constitution and reduction in size of the team will enable more focussed discussion and decision making, and facilitate increased flexibility to ensure the team represents a broad range of experiences and perspectives.

The overall structure of mandated district panels with regulatory functions, fora with which the District Leading Team will consult regularly, and working groups with specific tasks to oversee will be:



- (1) Who Is Your Neighbour?
- (2) Methodist Women In Britain

Whilst demonstrating the inherent complexity of our Connexional governance structures and the wide range of activities undertaken on behalf of the district, this does still represent a reduction in workload for district volunteers and staff.