

## **Methodist Council**

The Council met on the 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> October via Zoom.

The Council welcomed its new Chair the Revd Sonia Hicks and other new members including the President Designate the Revd Gill Newton.

The Council received a report from the Connexional Allowances Committee (CAC) following an emergency meeting held to discuss the issue of the increasing cost of living and its impact on ministers.

The Committee unanimously agreed:

- To make an immediate payment of £1,000 to every minister in the active work in receipt of a stipend, serving in an appointment in the control of the Church.
- To make a payment of £250 to every member of the Methodist Ministers Pension Scheme.

These payments are to be funded from the Fund for the Support of Presbyters and Deacons at a cost of £2M which represents approx. 20% of the funds available. This is affordable but the Council directed the Connexional Team to remind circuits of the need for ongoing donations to the fund, and also to remind ministers of the primary role of the fund which is to alleviate financial hardship for ministers.

The Council agreed to the recommendation made by the CAC to urge all Methodist employing bodies to implement the current living wage as soon as possible, and by no later than 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

In the light of these decisions the Council urges all Methodist employing bodies to review their own response to the impact of the cost of living issues on lay employees.

The 2022 Conference declined to receive the District Review section of the Oversight and Trusteeship report which included a recommendation to reduce the number of Districts. Post Conference, representatives were asked to complete a questionnaire in order to assist the Council in determining how consensus might be more effectively sought around whatever future proposals are brought.

This also has implications for the Conference decision to reduce the size of the Conference from 2024 which directs that the number of representatives elected by the Districts shall be no less than 70%. The new constitution of the Conference assumed a reduction in its ex-officio membership by having fewer District Chairs. A small group has been appointed to consider and recommend how the ex-officio proportion of the membership be constituted in order to maintain the 70% representation from the Districts.

Other reports received by the Council included Walking with Micah, Justice, Dignity and Solidarity, Positive Working Together and Modern Slavery Policy.

Full reports of non-confidential business are available on the Methodist Church website

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-conference/methodist-council/latest-council-papers/>

David Burton

Methodist Council Representative