



**THE METHODIST CHURCH  
IN IRELAND**

**Manual of Laws**

**REGULATIONS, DISCIPLINE AND**

**GOVERNMENT OF**

**THE METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND**

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## CHAPTER 1 - THE METHODIST CHURCH

**1.01.** "The Church of God which He purchased with His own blood"<sup>1</sup> has been ordained and established by Him for calling people into fellowship with Himself and with one another, according to His eternal purpose in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord.

Within this Church the Methodist Church holds a true place. For the Church of Christ exists as a visible community wherever two or three are gathered together in His Name and in obedience to His Spirit. It is the company of His disciples, consisting of such as confess Him to be the Son of God, accept Him as their Saviour and Lord, love one another and unite in the fellowship of those who serve the coming of His Kingdom on earth. In the providence of God, the Methodist Church has been raised up to spread scriptural holiness through the land by the proclamation of the evangelical faith and experience. It preaches the gospel of "a free, full, present salvation"<sup>2</sup> for everyone who repents and believes upon the Lord Jesus Christ. This gospel is the offer to the most unworthy of a new heart and the power to live a new life.

The Methodist Church declares that all believers in Christ may know their sins forgiven, live day by day with the peace of God in their souls and, rejoicing with "joy unspeakable and full of glory,"<sup>3</sup> may be enriched with all the privileges that belong to the children of God. It proclaims also the possibility, here and now, of Christians being made perfect in love through the obedience of faith.

Membership in the Methodist Church is not conditional upon the acceptance of any theological tests, nor dependent upon any traditional authority or ecclesiastical ritual. All persons are welcomed into membership who seek salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who evidence the same in life and conduct and service, and who seek fellowship with Christ Himself through fellowship with His people.

After adequate training, those who are approved by the Church Council are admitted to the full privileges and obligations of membership, and, at the earliest opportunity, are recognised at a service conducted by the minister in the presence of the congregation; the observance of the Lord's Supper being associated with this service. In the case of any persons about to be received into membership who have not been

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 20:28 AV

<sup>2</sup> MHB 316 v.3

<sup>3</sup> 1 Peter 1:8 AV

baptised, the Sacrament of Baptism shall be administered either before or in connection with this service. Those who take upon themselves the duties and privileges of membership of the Methodist Church have their names entered upon a Class Book and are placed under the care of a Class Leader. They are also expected, as far as they are able, to contribute to the funds of the Church and to engage in some form of Christian service.

The Methodist Church makes due provision for the regular and ordered Service of Holy Communion. It is the duty and privilege of all its members to avail themselves of every opportunity to partake reverently and in faith of the Lord's Supper. For in His Sacraments the presence of Christ, through His Spirit, is realised in response to the obedient faith of His people.

As the law of love is the law of Christ, the spirit and practice of Christian love is the supreme test of membership in the Methodist Church and an indispensable condition of abiding faithfully therein. Upon the same foundation of Christian love rest the social obligations and the sacrificial service for the Kingdom of God to which those who confess Christ commit themselves, after the example of their Lord and Master.

As union in Christian fellowship is the natural expression of Christian love, the distinctive Methodist institutions, and especially the Covenant Service, are based upon the assumption that those who love the Lord Jesus will become helpers one of another. Fellowship is, therefore, incumbent upon all the members of the Church. None may be counted as discharged from this debt of love, save those who are debarred, or physically unable to attend at the means of grace, and to these the Church owes special and tender care.

## **Methodism in Ireland**

**1.02** Methodism was introduced into Ireland in 1747. It met with formidable difficulties but the lives and labours of its preachers and leaders overcame persecution and prejudice, until in every part of the land its Divine mission was manifested by the multitudes turned from darkness to light, the quickening influence exerted on other Churches, and the raising of the standard of public morals.

Throughout the entire period of its history hundreds of its members annually found a home in other lands, where many of them were the earliest standard bearers of the Cross. Its numbers and influence in world-wide Methodism have been so great that the Methodist Church in Ireland is one of the least results of the Methodist Revival in this land.

In the years 1797-8 a controversy concerning the course taken by the Conference, in regard to the administration of the Sacraments and as to lay representation in the District Meetings and the Conference, resulted in a small secession which became united with the English Methodist New Connexion in 1799, and was the nucleus of the mission established by that Church in Ireland in the year 1825. Another and a more serious division took place in the years 1816-18, when the Conference permitted its ministers to administer the Sacraments, and the Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Society was then formed. Happily, both these divisions have now been healed. In the year 1878 the Wesleyan Methodist Society and the Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Society united as the Methodist Church on terms made possible by an Act of Parliament obtained by the latter body in 1871. In the year 1904 the Methodist New Connexion successfully negotiated the transfer of its stations in Ireland to the Methodist Church, while in 1910 the few societies in Ireland belonging to the English Primitive Methodist Church were also transferred to the care of the Irish Methodist Conference.

## General Rules of the Society of the People called Methodists

**1.03** No code of rules can comprehend all the obligations of membership, but "The Rules of the Society of the People called Methodists," drawn up by John and Charles Wesley in 1743, still enshrine the spirit of fellowship and universal goodwill to which members of the Methodist Church acknowledge allegiance in the social, civic and economic conditions of the present day.

These Rules, published in the year 1743, under the title, "The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies in London, Bristol, Kingswood, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, etc." are as follows: -

1. In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired (as did two or three more the next day) that I would spend some time with them in prayer and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a day when they might all come together: which, from thenceforward, they did every week, viz., on Thursday, in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them (for their number increased daily), I gave those advices from time to time which I judged most needful for them; and we always concluded our meetings with prayer suited to their several necessities.

2. This was the rise of the United Society, first in London, and then in other places. Such a Society is no other than "a company of men having the form, and seeking the power, of Godliness; united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation."
3. That it may the more easily be discerned whether they are indeed working out their own salvation, each Society is divided into smaller companies, called Classes, according to their respective places of abode. There are about twelve persons in every Class; one of whom is styled the Leader. It is his business-
  - (a) To see each person in his Class once a week, at least, in order to inquire how their souls prosper; To advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require; To receive what they are willing to give towards the relief of the poor.
  - (b) To meet the Ministers and the Stewards of the Society, once a week in order to inform the Minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly, and will not be reproved; To pay to the Stewards what they have received of their several Classes in the week preceding; and To show their account of what each person has contributed.
4. There is only one condition previously required in those who desire admission into these Societies, viz., "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and be saved from their sins." But wherever this is really fixed in the soul it will be shown by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

First – By doing no harm, by avoiding evil in every kind; especially that which is most generally practised. Such is: The taking the name of God in vain; The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling: Drunkenness; buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity. Fighting, quarrelling, brawling; brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using many words in buying or selling: The buying or selling uncustomed goods: The giving or taking things on usury: i.e., unlawful interest: Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation, particularly speaking evil of Magistrates, or of Ministers. Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us: Doing what we know is not for the glory of God; as, The "putting on of gold, or costly apparel"; The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus. The singing those songs, or reading those books which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God: Softness, and needless self-indulgence: Laying up treasure upon earth: Borrowing

without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

5. It is expected of all who continue in these Societies that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Secondly – By doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and as far as is possible to all men:

To their bodies, of the ability that God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison:

To their souls, by instructing, reprovng, or exhorting all they have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine of devils, that "we are not to do good, unless our hearts be free to it."

By doing good especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others, buying one of another, helping each other in business; and so much the more, because the world will love its own, and them only. By all possible diligence and frugality, that the Gospel be not blamed. By running with patience the race that is set before them, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ; to be as the filth and offscouring of the world; and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them falsely, for the Lord's sake.

6. It is expected of all who desire to continue in these Societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation.

*Thirdly* – By attending upon all the ordinances of God: such are,

- The public worship of God;
- The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded;
- The Supper of the Lord;
- Family and private prayer;
- Searching the Scriptures; and
- Fasting or abstinence.

7. These are the General Rules of our Societies; all which we are taught of God to observe, even in His written word, the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice. And all these we know His Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul, as they that

must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways: we will bear with him for a season. But then if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls.

*(Signed)* **JOHN WESLEY**

**May 1, 1743**

**CHARLES WESLEY**



## CHAPTER 2 - MEMBERSHIP IN THE METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND

### A Methodist Community

**2.01** A Methodist Community consists of:

- (a) Members of the Methodist Church in Ireland, recorded on the Membership Register,
- (b) Other adults with whom the church has an ongoing pastoral responsibility, recorded on the Congregational Register,
- (c) Those on the Junior Register.

### Admission to Membership

**2.02** The Methodist Church in Ireland welcomes into membership those who

- (a) have committed their lives to Christ,
- (b) show evidence of that commitment in life, conduct and service,
- (c) and formally accept the discipline of the Methodist Church and obligations of Membership.

**2.03** Such persons, after appropriate training under the pastoral and teaching oversight of a suitable leader, and approval of the Church Council and Circuit Superintendent, may be admitted into the privileges and obligations of membership and their names placed on the Membership Register.

Members of other Churches who satisfy the above requirements may be admitted to membership.

### Privileges of Membership

**2.04** Every member shall have their name recorded in the Membership register and should receive pastoral support and encouragement in their discipleship from the local minister and lay leaders.

**2.05** Only those whose names are recorded in the Membership Register shall be entitled to be members of the Church Council, Circuit Executive or Conference.

## Obligations of Membership

### **2.06** All members are expected to

- (a) attend the means of grace, especially the ministry of the Word, united prayer, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,
- (b) join with others in Christian fellowship,
- (c) engage in some form of Christian service,
- (d) financially support the ongoing work and mission of the church through regular giving,

so far as can reasonably be expected.

## Review of Membership

**2.07** The Membership Register shall be updated as necessary and will be formally reviewed annually prior to the final Church Council of each calendar year. At this meeting a full report on the Local Methodist Community should be presented. Following the presentation of these figures to the Circuit Executive meeting, they shall be returned to the Connexional Membership Secretary.

**2.08** A member, who in the judgment of the Church Council, has persistently failed to fulfil the Obligations of Membership, despite being reminded of those obligations, shall be regarded as having withdrawn from membership of the church and her/his name shall be removed from the Membership Register.

## Marriage of Members

**2.09** Marriages solemnised according to the usages of the Methodist Church in Ireland shall be conducted by a minister in full connexion with the Conference. The form of service shall be that which is authorised by the Conference.

## Dual Membership

**2.10** No person shall be reckoned as a member on more than one Circuit at the same time. When a member is enrolled on a second Circuit, the previous membership is thereby terminated.

## Transfer of Members

**2.11** When a member is transferring from one Circuit to another, a written Notice of Transfer shall be sent by the minister with pastoral responsibility for that member to the Superintendent of the Circuit to which the member is moving. If

the member is not able to confirm which circuit they hope to associate with, the Notice of Transfer shall be sent to the Superintendent of the District concerned.

- 2.12** When a Notice of Transfer is received, if the member wishes to associate, even temporarily, with a society on that Circuit or District, the Superintendent of the relevant Circuit shall then be accountable for the member and shall formally acknowledge reception of the transfer. If the member cannot be found by the Superintendent who received the Notice of Transfer or does not wish to associate with any society on the local Circuit/District, the minister who transferred the member shall be notified and shall resume pastoral responsibility for the member.
- 2.13** A member transferring to any place out of Ireland shall be entered in the Membership Register as an Emigrant. A member seeking to transfer to any other denomination shall be entered in the Membership Register as having Ceased to be a Member. In every case where possible a Notice of Transfer shall be sent.

### Congregational Register

- 2.14** The Congregational Register shall contain the names of those, aged 16 and over, who have not accepted or no longer accept the privileges and obligations of Membership, listed in two categories:
- (a) those who attend frequently at worship,
  - (b) those with whom there is pastoral contact.

These persons shall be placed under the pastoral oversight of Congregational Visitors appointed by the Church Council.

Those on the Congregational Register shall not be counted when consideration is given in regard to the rights, duties and privileges of Circuits.

### Junior Register

- 2.15** The Junior Register shall consist of all those under the age of 16 who have not yet accepted the privileges and obligations of Membership, including a record as to whether each person has or has not been baptised. Suitable persons shall be appointed by the Church Council to exercise pastoral care and, where possible, to provide fellowship for all on this register.

After the age of 16 the names of those who have not accepted the privileges and obligations of membership shall be transferred to the Congregational Register.

Those on the Junior Register shall not be counted when consideration is given in regard to the rights, duties and privileges of Circuits.

## Membership Classes

**2.16** Classes in which people shall be instructed in preparation for their intelligent acceptance of Membership shall regularly take place in every Circuit.

## Connexional Membership Records and Statistics

- 2.17** (a) The Governance Board shall appoint annually a minister as Connexional Membership Secretary.
- (b) Circuit Superintendents shall ensure that Membership, Congregational and Junior Registers on their circuits are accurately maintained, including records of all members transferred and received together with the names of any other Circuits or Churches concerned.
- (c) The Circuit membership of resident pupils at Wesley College, Dublin and Methodist College, Belfast, or any other secondary boarding school, as well as students in third level education, shall ordinarily be retained on their home Circuits. With the permission of the individuals concerned, or their guardians, notification of their membership shall be sent by the minister with pastoral responsibility for them to the appropriate Chaplain at the educational establishment concerned.
- (d) Annual statistical records of numbers on the Membership, Congregational and Junior Registers, as of the fifteenth day of December, shall be sent to the Connexional Membership Secretary, by Superintendents of Circuits, together with a list of receptions and removals of members, with the appropriate names and addresses.
- (e) The Connexional Membership Secretary shall make enquiry into every case in which a member reported as removed is not also recorded in the relevant report as having been received.
- (f) The Secretary shall compile from the Annual returns a statement of membership which shall be submitted to the Conference as the official membership figures for the year.

## CHAPTER 3 - MEANS OF GRACE

**3.01** The means of grace recognised by the Methodist Church include:

- (a) public worship and the Sacraments,
- (b) meetings for fellowship, prayer and Bible study,
- (c) family worship,
- (d) individual Bible study and prayer.

### Public Worship

**3.02** The usual order of public worship consists of:

THE PREPARATION which includes prayers of adoration and confession, with an assurance of God's forgiveness.

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD through the Old and New Testament Scripture readings and the Sermon. The use of the Lectionary is recommended.

THE RESPONSE in prayers of Thanksgiving, Intercession and Dedication.

Hymns, Songs, a Children's Address and other activities should be inserted where appropriate.

The Methodist Hymn Book (1933), Hymns and Psalms (1983), Singing the Faith (2011), the Revised Common Lectionary (1992), the Book of Offices (1936) and the Methodist Service Book (1975) are authorised for use. The Methodist Worship Book (1999) is recommended for use subject to the approval of the Church Council. These shall be used for the administration of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and for the celebration of marriage.

Services at the New Year traditionally include a Watchnight Service on the last night of the year and the Covenant Service on the first Sunday of the year.

### The Sacraments

**3.03** There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ, that is to say, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

### **3.04 Baptism.**

The Sacrament of Baptism shall, if possible, be administered in connection with public worship, and, in general, only to the children of members and those on the Congregational Register, and to adults who have not previously been baptised. Careful instruction on the meaning of baptism shall be given to parents of children and to adults requesting this Sacrament.

- (a) All baptisms shall be registered by the officiating minister in the Baptismal Register. Baptisms of children shall also be entered in the Junior Roll of the Circuit.
- (b) No probationer shall administer this Sacrament without the express sanction of the Circuit Superintendent.
- (c) Recognising that the Church has not authorised rebaptism, a minister receiving a request for baptism from one who has been baptised as an infant, shall advise the applicant regarding Methodist usage. Should the applicant, on grounds of conscience, still desire this ceremony, the minister concerned shall seek advice on this matter from the President through the Superintendent of the District.

### **The Lord's Supper**

**3.05** The Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly in every church and be administered by a minister in full connexion.

The administration shall be by the Superintendent or other minister in full connexion except as provided for in the Authorisations to Preside at Holy Communion Policy or should the Conference deem it necessary to give dispensation to a probationer minister to preside.

Admission to the Lord's Supper shall be the privilege of members of the Church, and such members of the congregation, including children who wish to communicate, as the minister may judge to be eligible.

The wine used in the ordinance shall be unfermented.

At observances of the Lord's Supper an offering for the Benevolent Fund shall normally be received.

## Meetings for fellowship, prayer and Bible study

**3.06** Meetings for fellowship, prayer and Bible study shall be held on church premises, in homes and other suitable places, in different parts of the Circuit, at times which will not interfere with public worship.

## Family Worship

**3.07** Regular and reverent family worship and the saying of grace before meals are encouraged in all homes. Members are encouraged to engage in regular reading of and meditation on Scripture and in private prayer.

## CHAPTER 4 - MINISTRY

**4.01** The Methodist Church in Ireland affirms that the whole body of Christ is called to share in his priestly ministry of reconciliation. It is a ministry exercised within the community of faith as well as within and for the wider sphere of community, society, and world. Within this general calling, the individual members of the Church express their shared ministry in a variety of ways. Some (often simply referred to as ‘ministers’) are set aside for life and ordained as ministers of Word, sacrament and pastoral oversight. Some (for example, Local Preachers) are appointed to a particular office which they exercise with the authority and under the discipline of the Church as a whole. Others exercise a role within the ministry of the local Church or Circuit which may reflect a formal appointment (for example, as Steward, Sunday School Teacher or Pastoral Visitor) or may reflect (for example, in the case of members of a choir or prayer ministry team) less formal, but still essential, aspects of the Church’s ministry. Additionally, local churches sometimes employ lay people to carry out specific ministries within and beyond Church. All these roles exist to help **all people** grow in their own discipleship and ministry, discern their calling clearly, and equip them to exercise their gifts effectively.

### The Ministries Team

- 4.02** The Ministries Team exists to support the Methodist Church’s priorities for lay and ordained ministry by equipping people across Ireland to develop their ministries in different roles and contexts. The team shall:
- (a) Inspire and promote the ministry of the whole church.
  - (b) Promote and deliver theological education and training through the provision of a variety of learning and development opportunities.
  - (c) Enable the development of lay and ordained ministry and leadership.
  - (d) Oversee the processes relating to selection for ministry and ongoing ministry personnel matters.



The work of the Ministries Team is supported through two standing committees:

- (a) Ministries Learning and Development Committee
- (b) Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee

### **The Ministries Learning and Development Committee**

**4.03** The membership of the committee will be determined from time to time but will include the following: The chair of the committee, The Director of the Ministries Team (Convenor), the Connexional Local Preachers Co-ordinator, the vice chair of the Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee, the Learning Development Officer plus six additional members.

The additional members will be appointed with due regard to their knowledge and skills in relation to strategic development, training, finance, and human resource development.

Appointments will also take account of geographical representation, gender balance and appropriate representation of lay and ordained.

The committee will be responsible for advising the team on the following:

- (a) Learning and development for congregational life
- (b) Continuing Development for vocational lay employees (in conjunction with IMYCD)
- (c) Ordained Ministry Development including Continuing Development, Sabbaticals, Further Studies and Pastoral Efficiency
- (d) Initial and ongoing training for Local Preachers (in conjunction with the Connexional Local Preachers Committee)
- (e) Initial Formation for Ordained Ministry.

**4.04** The Connexional Lay Leader, in conjunction with the District Lay Leaders, shall convene Lay Ministry Forums across the districts to support lay ministry

development. The Forum shall report to the Ministries Learning and Development Committee.

- 4.05** The Ministries Learning and Development Committee reports to the Connexional Team, through the Director of the Ministries Team.

### **The Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee**

- 4.06** The Committee shall be appointed annually by the Governing Board. It will include the following:

The Chair of the Committee (who shall also normally chair the Ministerial Selection Panel),

The Vice Chair of the Committee,

The Director of the Ministries Team (Convenor),

The Ministerial Psychological Assessor,

The Secretary of Conference,

The Connexional Local Preachers Co-ordinator,

A District Superintendent.

Up to four other members with suitable experience in relation to ministerial formation and human resource management.

The group will be responsible for the following:

- (a) Drafting and updating policies and procedures relating to the operations of authorized ministries in the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- (b) Ordained Ministry selection – Candidates and applications from those serving with other churches.
- (c) Ordained Ministry Formation Progress
- (d) Processes relating to ministerial sabbaticals and further study/development grants.

- (e) Special Applications for Ordained Ministers serving in appointments beyond the stations of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- (f) Procedures relating to nomination and appointment of Local Preachers (in conjunction with the Connexional Local Preachers Committee).

In relation to (a) to (e) above, the Committee reports to the Ministerial Session of Conference. In relation to (f), the Committee reports to the Representative Session of Conference.

**4.07** Appeals relating to recommendations made by the Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee will be made to the President's Advisory Committee who shall report on these matters to the appropriate session of Conference.

**4.08** The work of the Ministries Department and allowances for ordained ministry formation students shall be financed by the comprehensive assessment and the theological endowments.

**4.09** Under the provisions of the Methodist College Act (Northern Ireland), 1928 and until the merger of Edgehill Theological College with the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Governance Board of the Methodist Church in Ireland shall function as the Board of Governors of Edgehill Theological College.

## CHAPTER 5 - ORDAINED MINISTRY

### 5A THE OFFICE AND DUTY OF AN ORDAINED MINISTER

- 5A.01** An ordained minister is ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament, in full connexion with the Conference and answerable to Synod and Conference in matters of discipline and doctrine.
- 5A.02** The office of an ordained minister is to:
- (a) win and watch over souls as one who must give account,
  - (b) feed and guide the congregation by regular and faithful preaching, teaching and pastoral care,
  - (c) recognise that the quality of her/his life and witness will determine her/his effectiveness under God,
  - (d) exercise such self-discipline that no offence or occasion to stumble is given to anyone,
  - (e) act with particular responsibility in matters where her/his actions may be the cause of physical or moral harm to others.
- 5A.03** In addition, the duties of a Methodist ordained minister shall include:
- (a) to obey reverently the ordained ministers placed in authority over her/him, and not to take part against her/his Superintendent or encourage anyone who opposes her/him in the discharge of official duties,
  - (b) to attend to all matters pertaining to Methodist discipline,
  - (c) to meet and confer with the Church Council in regard to the members under its care, and the work of God in each Society,
  - (d) to remember that Methodism, as a Church, does not exist for the purpose of party and that Methodists are especially bound by the example of their founder and by the original principles on which the Societies were formed, to be "friends of all, and enemies of none,"
  - (e) to regard ordained ministerial colleagues as co-workers in the Gospel and when necessary, defend each other's character and reputation and endeavour each to prefer the other before self.

- (f) to engage in further study, supervision and appraisal, training and professional development as directed by the Ordained Ministry Committee.

## Superintendent Ministers - Duties

**5A.04** The ordained minister whose name stands immediately after the name of a Circuit, except where specified otherwise in the List of Stations, is the Superintendent of the Circuit.

The Superintendent shall be accountable for the proper maintenance of discipline in the Circuit. Her/his colleagues are co-pastors, with whom he/she shall confer on all matters affecting the interests of the Circuit, but the ultimate responsibility for action shall rest with her/him.

Subject to the rules and usage in regard to the different matters, it is the duty of the Superintendent:

- (a) To instruct the probationers under her/his care in the various details of their work; to inquire into their behaviour and studies, and, at proper times, into their Christian life and experience.
- (b) To admit into, and exclude from Church membership, in conjunction with the Church Council; to oversee effective pastoral care, to keep lists of members received from or removed to other Circuits; to forward the Membership Schedule to the Secretary of the Membership Bureau, to enter all necessary particulars in the Circuit Schedule Book; to forward in due time all such statistical information relating to the Circuit as may be required by rule.
- (c) To arrange with her/his colleagues for the holding of Congregational Meetings, weeknight meetings and Church Council meetings; to arrange for the holding of Circuit Meetings, Trustees' Meetings and meetings of the Circuit Executive; to see that the Circuit plan is prepared and fulfilled; to see that public worship is conducted in all the Churches and other preaching places as provided for in the Circuit plan; that special attention be given to the opening of new preaching appointments, and so far as possible, in conjunction with her/his colleagues, to engage the members in such suitable work as may develop their gifts and contribute to the greater efficiency of the Church.
- (d) To secure through the Connexional Team prior permission of the Governance Board before discontinuing Sunday services in any Church or preaching-place located on the Circuit.
- (e) To ensure that all official meetings of the Circuit are properly chaired.

- (f) With the assistance of the Circuit Executive to nominate Circuit Officials for election by the Circuit Meeting.
- (g) To nominate suitable persons for the office of Local Preacher and suitable candidates for the ordained ministry.
- (h) To ensure that the accounts of the Circuit and the Society Treasurers, the accounts of the Trustees and all other accounts pertaining to any department of Circuit work are properly kept and duly audited.
- (i) To ensure that the property is kept in good repair and used only for the purposes specified in the Deeds under which it is held; to obtain the requisite sanction, before proceeding with the erection, enlargement, purchase, or sale of any Trust property; to take care that all property acquired for Trust purposes in the Circuit is duly settled according to the Statutory Trusts; and that new Trustees are duly appointed when necessary.
- (j) To ensure that only persons duly accredited are permitted to preach in any place of worship under her/his care.
- (k) To ensure that the Baptismal Register, the Circuit Schedule Book, the Furniture Book, the Circuit Register of Members and Classes, lists of families belonging to the congregation with their names and addresses, lists of children on the Circuit who are receiving grants from the Child Care Society, with all other books, lists, or forms required to be kept, are duly and accurately filled, kept and presented to the appropriate authorities, or left for her/his successor, or otherwise dealt with as the regulations of the Conference may require.
  - (i) The names of members of Society shall be entered in the Membership Register and Quarterly Class Roll
  - (ii) The Membership Register and Quarterly Class Roll shall be submitted to the Spring Synod for examination and report.
- (l) To submit the Circuit Schedule Book for examination by the District Superintendent.
- (m) To ensure that all collections for Connexional Funds are made at the proper times, and the amounts forwarded promptly to the respective Treasurers.
- (n) To furnish lists of preaching places and members of Society to Superintendents to whose care the same may have been transferred on account of changes in Circuit boundaries.

- (o) To fill the Circuit Plan Schedule for the use of her/his successor when leaving a Circuit.
- (p) To attend to all other matters and duties pertaining to her/his office, or which may, from time to time, be specified by the Conference.

## **5B ITINERANCY**

- 5B.01** The rule which regulates and provides for the itinerancy among the ordained ministers and probationers of the Conference is contained in the Fifth Section of the Methodist Church in Ireland Acts, 1928. As amended, it declares that the Conference may appoint any minister for any number of years successively, to the use and enjoyment of any chapel or premises given or to be given or conveyed on the trusts recited in the said Acts.
- 5B.02** As presently provided for by the Constitution, Section VII, 4, as amended, the appointment of an ordained minister shall be for an open and flexible term, subject to the provisions of paragraph 5B.01.
- 5B.03** All appointments shall be subject to review and confirmation annually by the Conference which has the unquestionable right to appoint ordained ministers and probationers in any way it may consider best in the interests of the Connexion.
- 5B.04** It is provided in the Methodist Church in Ireland Acts, 1928, Section 5, (b), that "the Conference may appoint any minister to any institution or department, or to the use and enjoyment of any premises declared by the Conference to be used for the purpose of a Mission, for any number of years successively". The declaration of Conference that any station shall henceforth be a Mission shall be made by Conference on the recommendation of the Connexional Team, and by a vote of Conference in which at least three-fourths of the members present, and voting, approve of the alteration.
- 5B.05** All appointments of ordained ministers and probationers are made by the Conference as from the 1st July to the next succeeding 30th June.

**5B.06** Ordained ministers and probationers, newly appointed, are expected to be in the Circuits to which they are appointed not later than the third Sunday of July, the date to be arranged by correspondence between the ministers concerned.

## **5C MODES OF ORDAINED MINISTRY**

**5C.01** (a) The Methodist Church in Ireland recognises one form of ordained ministry, presbyteral ministry, which can be exercised in various ways:

- (i) Full-time Stipendiary Ministry: This is an itinerant ministry in which ministers can be stationed across Ireland and for which a full stipend is paid.
  - (ii) Non-Stipendiary Ministry: This is an itinerant ministry in which ministers feel called by God to be self-supporting while exercising ordained ministry. The distinctive feature of this ministry is that it is self-supporting in which no stipend is paid.
  - (iii) Ministry in a Part-time Appointment: This is an itinerant ministry in which ministers feel called by God to be partially self-supporting while exercising ordained ministry. The distinctive feature of this ministry is that the minister receives a pro-rata stipend in accordance with the scales set down by the Conference.
- (b) Any minister wishing to transfer between modes of ministry shall inform her/his District Superintendent and shall make application in writing to the Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee through the Secretary of Conference by 30th September detailing the reasons for the request. The final decision in relation to the transfer shall be made by the Ministerial Session of the Conference.

### Full-time Stipendiary Ministry

**5C.02** Those in the Full-time Stipendiary ministry receive a full stipend, in accordance with scales as laid down by the Conference, and may engage in regular paid employment outside circuit and connexional commitments only under the following conditions:



- (a) after consultation with the District Superintendent, conducted through the Circuit Superintendent (unless the minister is Superintendent),
- (b) after the opportunities on the Circuit, as well as the contribution to the mission of the church the proposed paid employment would be likely to make, have been assessed by the Church Council(s) and Circuit Executive
- (c) after the consent of the Church Council(s) and Circuit Executive and of the District Advisory Committee has been obtained,
- (d) that the amount by which the income from such paid employment exceeds the gross amount determined from time to time by the Stipends and Allowances Board will be deducted from her/his stipend and remitted in equal sums to the Treasurers of the Home Mission and Retirement Funds.

### Non-Stipendiary Ministry

**5C.03** (a) Non-Stipendiary ministry is a 'tent-making' ministry for those who are self-supporting.

(b) A Non-Stipendiary minister is free to offer as much time as he/she is able to a circuit but shall offer a minimum of two Sunday services a month and two sessions a week to the Circuit in which he/she is stationed (a session being roughly equivalent to a morning, afternoon or evening).

(c) In the List of Stations, the suffix NS shall be placed after the name of a Non-Stipendiary minister but removed when he/she retires.

(d) A Non-Stipendiary minister who has served in an appointment for the maximum of eight years will normally take one year's leave of absence for reading and reflection. Any Non-Stipendiary minister who does not avail of the year's leave of absence after eight years will be eligible for a sabbatical under the terms of the Sabbaticals for Ordained Ministers Policy and Procedures.

(e) A Non-Stipendiary minister has no entitlement to a manse, but if a manse is available he/she may avail of it only with the approval of the Home Mission Department.

(f) No contributions to the funds of the Church which exist for the support of the Stipendiary Ministry shall be required of a Non-Stipendiary minister and no benefits therefrom shall be available.

(g) Expenses shall be reimbursed by the Circuit in accordance with the scale determined by the Governance Board.

(h) A Non-Stipendiary minister may hold such offices in the District and the Conference as her/his circumstances permit.

(i) At any point a Non-Stipendiary minister may request a meeting with the Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee with the purpose of reviewing ministry and addressing any particular questions.

(j) A Non-Stipendiary minister must apply through the Secretary of Conference to the Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee for permission to take on or change outside employment.

### Ministry in a Part-time Appointment

**5C.04** (a) Ministry in a Part-time Appointment is a ‘tent making’ ministry similar to Non-Stipendiary Ministry, differing primarily in that the minister receives a pro-rata stipend in accordance with the scales set down by the Conference

(b) In the List of Stations, the suffix PT shall be placed after the name of a minister in a Part-time Appointment but removed when he/she retires.

(c) A minister in a Part-time Appointment has no entitlement to a manse, but if a manse is available he/she may avail of it, subject to the agreement of the circuit and the approval of the Home Mission Department and provided the tax implications have been clarified.

(d) A minister in a Part-time Appointment shall make pro-rata contributions to the funds of the Church which exist for the support of the Stipendiary Ministry and avail of those benefits on a pro-rata basis, or as determined by the Stipends and Allowances Board.

(e) Expenses shall be reimbursed by the Circuit in accordance with the scale determined by the Stipends and Allowances Board.

(f) A minister in a Part-time Appointment may hold such offices in the District and the Conference as her/his circumstances permit.

(g) At any point a minister in a Part-time Appointment may request a meeting with the Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee with the purpose of reviewing ministry and addressing any particular questions.

(h) A minister in a Part-time Appointment must apply through the Secretary of Conference to the Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee for permission to take on or change outside employment.

## Stationing

**5C.05** The following regulations apply to the stationing of Non-Stipendiary ministers and ministers in Part-time Appointments:

- (a) A Non-Stipendiary minister or minister in Part-time Appointment anticipating a new appointment at the ensuing Conference must:
  - (i) submit to her/his District Superintendent a 'Minister's Profile for a Part-time or Non-Stipendiary Appointment' on the form provided, in addition to a Stationing Procedures form. This profile will make clear any particular issues relevant to her/his stationing, including the number of sessions for which he/she will be available to a Circuit; and
  - (ii) meet with the District Superintendent to discuss the needs and expectations of the minister regarding Non-Stipendiary ministry or ministry in a Part-time Appointment.
- (b) Any Circuit seeking the new appointment of a Non-Stipendiary minister or a minister in a Part-time Appointment shall make application to the Connexional Team through the District Superintendent.
  - (i) After the draft of stations has been published, representatives of the Society and Circuit involved will meet with their designated minister to begin the process of drafting a Working Agreement (the pro-forma for which will be available from the Secretary of Conference).
  - (ii) The Secretary of Conference is responsible for ensuring that a clear Working Agreement is in place with a church receiving a Non-Stipendiary minister or minister in Part-time Appointment by 15th May in the year of the change.
- (c) In any year the stationing subgroup of the Connexional Team may deem it appropriate to recommend the appointment of a Non-Stipendiary minister or a minister in Part-time Appointment where no application has been made and shall do so in direct consultation with that Circuit, Department or Institution.
- (d) The appointment of a Non-Stipendiary minister or a minister in Part-time Appointment to a Circuit shall be from year to year for a maximum of eight years.
- (e) A Non-Stipendiary minister or minister in a Part-time Appointment is normally stationed within 30 miles of her/his home and continues to live in that home.

(f) If during the Connexional year a Non-Stipendiary minister or minister in Part-time Appointment is transferred to another location by her/his outside employer, the situation shall be considered by the Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee which shall advise the stationing subgroup of the Connexional Team and the President of the Conference to take such action as may be necessary, acting under the regulations of the Church.

(g) In the List of Stations, when a Non-Stipendiary minister or minister in a Part-time Appointment is appointed to a station where a 'line' exists, the line should be printed after the name of the minister.

## 5D ORDAINED MINISTRY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee as set out in [Chapter 4](#) of the Manual of Laws is responsible for the drafting of new and reviewing of existing policies. Each policy sets out key features and responsibilities. Amendments shall be agreed by the Governance Board of the Methodist Church in Ireland and reported to the Conference. The following policies and procedures are currently in operation: *please click on links to see the policies*

1. [Candidating Procedure for Ordained Ministry](#)
2. [Context-based Formation Protocols](#)
3. [Applications to serve with or transfer to the Ordained Ministry of the Methodist Church in Ireland](#)
4. [Sabbaticals for Ordained Ministers Policy](#)
5. [Ordained Ministers Special Applications Policy](#)
6. [Withdrawal from and Reinstatement to Ministry Policy](#)
7. [Ordained Ministry agreed expectations policy](#)
8. [Ordained Ministry by Married Couples Policy](#)
9. [Ordained Ministers Serving as Mission Partners Policy](#)
10. [Ordained Ministers Separated Appointments Policy](#)

11. [Ordained Ministers Parental Leave Policy](#)
12. [Ordained Ministers Time Wisdom Policy](#)
13. [Ordained Ministers Retirement Policy](#)
14. [Death of an Ordained Minister policy](#)
15. [Guidelines for Ordained Ministers of other Connexions or Denominations  
Serving with the Methodist Church in Ireland.](#)
16. [Ministry Development and Further study Grant policy](#)
17. [Ordained Ministry Disciplinary Policy](#)

## CHAPTER 6 - LAY MINISTRY

### 6A Local Preachers

**6A.01** A Local Preacher is a member of the Church, recognised as qualified and called to preach the Gospel, though not “separated” from her/his ordinary business.

**6A.02** A Committee shall be appointed annually by the Governance Board. It shall ensure that proper processes and procedures are followed in relation to training, accreditation and development of Local Preachers. It shall be constituted as follows:

- The Lay Leader of the Conference
- The Connexional Local Preachers’ Co-ordinator
- A member of the staff of the Ministries Team
- The District Co-ordinators for Local Preachers.

**6A.03** Each District shall have a forum open to all Local Preachers, both accredited and in training. The purpose of the forum is to facilitate prayer and support for this ministry, organise training and development opportunities, and to gather information to feedback to the Connexional Committee and to the Ministries Learning and Development Committee.

**6A.04** Regulations regarding nomination, appointment and review of Local Preachers are set out in protocols prepared by the Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee in consultation with the Local Preachers’ Committee, approved by the Governance Board and reported to Conference. Any amendments to the protocols shall be approved by the Governance Board and reported to Conference.

**6A.05** Each Local Preacher is required to:

- (a) attend fellowship meetings of the Church and the Lord’s Supper.

- (b) affirm annually that he/she continues to believe and preach our doctrines and to observe the discipline of the Church.

Circuit Superintendents shall be asked to confirm annually to the District Superintendent that the Local Preachers on their Circuits have affirmed that they continue to believe and preach our doctrines and observe the discipline of the Methodist Church in Ireland and that this has been noted by the March Circuit Executive.

**6A.06** Each Local Preacher who has not retired is required to commit to 15 hours of further learning or training per year.

**6A.07** If the Local Preacher is unwilling to make the affirmation required by paragraph 6A.05 above, her/his name will be removed from the Circuit Preaching Plan and the Connexional list of Local Preachers.

In a case where the Local Preacher makes the affirmation, but the Circuit Executive has reason to doubt her/him, the matter shall be reported to the District Superintendent who shall then arrange to convene a District Disciplinary Committee.

**6A.08** If a Local Preacher behaves in a manner considered by the Circuit Executive to be inappropriate or a charge is made against a Local Preacher, he/she will be subject to the Disciplinary Procedures set out below in section 6B.

**6A.09** When a Local Preacher has resigned because he/she has been unable to subscribe to Methodist doctrine and discipline and seeks to be reinstated as a Local Preacher he/she shall:

- (a) make application through the Superintendent Minister to the Circuit Executive. Such application shall not be made until two years have elapsed from her/his re-admission to membership of the Methodist Church, or if membership has not ceased, until two years from the date of her/his resignation.
- (b) be examined at the Circuit Executive. Re-instatement shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting in favour of the application.

- 6A.10** When a Local Preacher has been asked to resign, or been removed, due to behaviour thought to be inappropriate for anyone called to be a preacher of the Gospel, and seeks to be re-instated he/she shall:
- (a) make application through the Superintendent Minister to the Circuit Executive. Such application shall not be made until five years have elapsed from her/his re-admission to Membership of the Methodist Church, or if membership has not ceased, until five years from the date of her/his resignation or removal.
  - (b) have her/his application for re-instatement referred to the District Disciplinary Committee, the report from which shall be considered before the application proceeds to the Circuit Executive.
  - (c) be examined at the Circuit Executive. Re-instatement shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting in favour of the application.
- 6A.11** No person who has been suspended or expelled from the Ministry shall be employed as a Local Preacher without the consent of the Conference.
- 6A.12** A Local Preacher removing from one Circuit to another shall, on production of her/his Certificate of Accreditation as a Local Preacher, together with a letter from the Superintendent Minister stating that he/she is in good standing, be placed on the plan of the latter Circuit.
- 6A.13** Circuit and Society Treasurers shall be responsible for the payment of travelling expenses to all Local Preachers who conduct services on their Circuits, as outlined in the Minutes of Conference.

## District Local Preachers' Co-ordinators

- 6A.14** The District Superintendent, in consultation with the District Advisory Committee, shall appoint a Local Preacher as District Local Preachers' Co-ordinator, who shall collect information concerning the work of Local Preachers on the District.

District Co-ordinators for Local Preachers shall keep a list of all Local Preachers on their Districts.



**6A.15** District Local Preachers' Co-ordinators shall forward their reports to the Connexional Local Preachers' Co-ordinator.

**6A.16** The statistical returns shall show as active Local Preachers all those who are able and willing to take appointments.

**6A.17** The third Sunday in September shall be recognised as the Sunday designated for Celebration and Affirmation of the ministry of Local Preachers. A Circuit service of Celebration and Affirmation shall be arranged on each Circuit. All active Local Preachers are expected to attend this service. The order and form of this service should follow the guidance provided by the Connexional Committee.

## Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee

**6A.18** The Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee as set out in [Chapter 4](#) of the Manual of Laws is responsible for the drafting of new and reviewing of existing policies relating to Local Preachers. Each policy sets out key features and responsibilities. Amendments shall be agreed by the Governance Board of the Methodist Church in Ireland and reported to the Conference. The following policy is currently in operation: click to view

- [Nomination, Appointment and Review of Local Preachers](#)

*Regulations concerning circuit Local Preachers' Meetings are found in [Chapter 11 CIRCUIT ORGANISATION](#)*

## **6B Disciplinary Proceedings for Local Preachers**

**6B.01** A charge against a Local Preacher may be referred:

- (a) by any ordained minister or member who shall formulate the charge in writing and deliver it to the Superintendent Minister of the Circuit of which the accused is a member.
- (b) or by a resolution of the Church Council of the Society of which the accused is a member, which shall appoint one or more of its members to state the charge in writing and deliver it to the Superintendent Minister.

## Hearing at Circuit Executive

### **6B.02** The Superintendent Minister shall forthwith:

- (a) arrange, in consultation with the District Superintendent, a Circuit Executive to investigate the charge.
- (b) send a copy of the charge to the Local Preacher accused giving at least seven clear days' notice of the time and place of the Circuit Executive called to investigate the charge.
- (c) give each member of the Circuit Executive seven clear days' notice of the time and place of meeting and of the purpose for which it is summoned.

**6B.03** If a witness to a material fact be unable to attend the Circuit Executive in person, owing to distance or ill-health, the evidence of such witness may be accepted in the form of a written, signed and authenticated statement delivered to the District Superintendent at least three days before the Circuit Executive. The District Superintendent shall peruse the statement and be satisfied that it does not contain irrelevant or inadmissible matter and that the evidence may be accepted in that form, without prejudice to the interests of the other party in consequence of there being no opportunity for cross-examination. If so satisfied, the District Superintendent shall submit a copy to the party against whom it is proposed to be used.

### **6B.04 At the Circuit Executive:**

- (a) the District Superintendent shall preside; unless he/she is also Superintendent of the Circuit concerned, in which case the President shall

nominate the Superintendent of another Circuit in the District or the Superintendent of an adjoining District to preside.

- (b) the Chairperson shall ensure that evidence presented shall be strictly confined to matters relevant to the charge before the meeting - all matters of hearsay, inference and opinion shall be rigorously excluded. Any person disregarding the ruling of the Chairperson in these respects shall be refused further hearing.
- (c) after the meeting has been duly opened, the Chairperson shall state the purpose of the meeting, and shall read the charge.
- (d) the person bringing the charge may address the meeting in support of the charge and proceed to call evidence. The evidence shall, as far as may be practicable, be given orally, and be subject to cross-examination.
- (e) the person charged may address the meeting and call evidence to rebut the charge.
- (f) the person bringing the charge may address the meeting in reply.
- (g) the parties to the charge and their witnesses shall withdraw from the meeting.
- (h) the members of the meeting shall proceed to deliberate on the matter; the investigation shall be confined strictly to the subject matter of the written charge but if the meeting shall be of the opinion and resolve, that it is expedient in order to make a complete investigation and ensure that justice is done, that the charge be amended, the meeting shall be adjourned for at least ten days to enable the amended charge to be prepared and a copy thereof delivered to the person accused seven clear days before the adjourned meeting.
- (i) the meeting shall determine whether the charge is found to be: not sustained. partially sustained, and to what extent, wholly sustained, and may add to its finding a rider or expression of opinion.

- (j) if the charge is found partially or wholly sustained the Meeting shall have power to admonish, rebuke, suspend or remove her/him from office in the Church. Suspension from office may be for a definite or indefinite period, or subject to any condition as to its duration or removal. In no case shall sentence of removal from office be pronounced until after the lapse of at least seven days subsequent to the meeting at which the charge was found to have been sustained.
- (k) the finding of the Circuit Executive shall be announced by the Chairperson at the meeting at which the investigation has taken place, or at any adjournment thereof, of which the parties have had due notice, and a copy of the finding, signed by the Chairperson and Secretary of the meeting, shall forthwith be transmitted to each party by the Secretary.
- (l) full minutes of the proceedings shall be recorded, not in the ordinary Minute Book of the Circuit Executive, but in a separate book provided for the purpose, and confirmed and signed by the Chairperson at the same meeting or at any adjournment thereof. The production of such minutes may be called for in the event of an appeal.

The special Minute Book shall be in the care of the Superintendent of the Circuit who shall be responsible for its safe custody until the case is finally disposed of when the Minute Book and all relevant documents shall be transmitted without delay to the Secretary of Conference for safe keeping. If a Minute Book containing defamatory entries is published to some unauthorised person, either by intentional act or negligence of the custodian, an action at law may lie against the custodian.

**6B.05** A local preacher who has been removed from office shall not be readmitted to office in the same or any other Circuit without previous consultation with the Circuit Executive which decided to remove her/him from office.

## Appeal to the District

**6B.06** Within fourteen days after the pronouncement of the finding of the Circuit Executive, either party to the charge may, if dissatisfied with the finding or the sentence, appeal to the District Disciplinary Committee by serving written notice of appeal on:

- (a) the District Superintendent, or in cases where the District Superintendent is one of the parties concerned, or is the Superintendent Minister of the Circuit in which the proceedings took place, upon the President of the Conference, together with a copy of the charge and a copy of the finding of the Circuit Executive;
- (b) the other party concerned;
- (c) the Secretary of the Circuit Executive before which the charge was originally heard, who shall upon receipt of notice of appeal, forward to the District Superintendent, or President of the Conference, the duly confirmed minutes of all proceedings of the Circuit Executive in relation to the charge.

**6B.07** The District Superintendent, or the President of the Conference, shall forthwith convene a District Disciplinary Committee to hear the appeal. In cases where the President of the Conference is called upon to act, he/she shall nominate a Superintendent of another District to act as the Chairperson of the District Disciplinary Committee, but such Chairperson shall not be the minister who presided over the Circuit Executive at the trial of the charge.

**6B.08** The District Disciplinary Committee shall consist of not less than seven members chosen, if possible, from the District in which the accused is listed as a Local Preacher, as follows: the District Superintendent (or where he/she is an interested party, an ordained minister appointed by the President of the Conference), two ordained ministers chosen by the District Superintendent, four Local Preachers, two of whom may be nominated by the accuser, and two by the accused.

Should either the accuser or accused neglect or refuse to nominate Local Preachers within seven days after being called to do so, the District Superintendent or the ordained minister appointed by the President of the Conference shall choose Local Preachers to complete the constitution of the District Disciplinary Committee.

**6B.09** The ordained minister appointed as Chairperson of the District Disciplinary Committee shall arrange the time and place of its meeting and shall ensure that the parties concerned are given at least seven days' notice. The District Disciplinary Committee shall re-hear the charge and, subject to the rules as to relevance and admissibility of evidence, either party may produce evidence in addition to that produced before the Circuit Executive. The rules of procedure for the Circuit Executive ([paragraph 6B.04](#)) shall apply.

## Appeal to the Conference

**6B.10** Either party to the charge, if dissatisfied with the finding of the District Disciplinary Committee, may within fourteen days after the finding has been communicated to her/him, appeal to the Conference by giving notice in writing to:

- (a) the Secretary of the Conference,
- (b) the other party to the charge,
- (c) the Chairperson of the District Disciplinary Committee, who shall thereupon ensure that the minutes and proceedings of the Circuit Executive and of the District Disciplinary Committee are produced to the Conference, and available on the hearing of the appeal.

Such appeal shall be entertained only at the Conference immediately following the District Disciplinary Committee by which the charge or appeal has been dealt with, and then only upon notice duly given, in accordance with the foregoing rules (see paragraph 6B.02), unless the Conference shall be satisfied that any delay or omission to give notice was

due to circumstances for which the appellant cannot be held responsible and that no prejudice or injustice has been or may be caused to the respondent by such delay or omission.

**6B.11** Notice of appeal shall be brought before the Conference in its Ministerial Session by its Secretary, and the Conference shall thereupon appoint a committee to hear the charge.

The President of the Conference or, if he/she is an interested party or has already presided at one of the former hearings, another ordained minister appointed by the Conference, shall preside over the committee.

The rules of procedure before such committee shall be the same as before the Circuit Executive ([paragraph 6B.04](#)) and the District Disciplinary Committee ([paragraphs 6B.06 – 6B.09](#)).

The committee shall present its report in writing, with full minutes of its proceedings, to the Conference, which may adopt or reject the said report in whole or in part, with or without variation or amendment, but the proceedings in the Conference shall be confined to the presentation and discussion of the report, and there shall be no rehearing of the case.

## CHAPTER 7 - THE CONFERENCE AND THE CONNEXIONAL TEAM

**7.01** The governing body of the Methodist Church in Ireland is the Conference, which consists of two Sessions, a Ministerial and a Representative Session.

The Conference is ultimately responsible for the governance of the church and all elements of the church are accountable to it. However, in accordance with the Constitution (VI.10), and with the exception of the duties laid out below in Chapter 7, Conference delegates all control, direction, administration and management of the day-to-day governance of the Methodist Church in Ireland to the [Governance Board](#) (See Chapter 9). This delegation also includes the direction that the Governance Board act as the Charity Trustees of the Church.

**7.02** The Conference, in its Ministerial and Representative sessions, shall deal with the following:

- (a) The formulation and articulation of the theological basis, vision, purposes and overarching policies of the Church and the provision of spiritual and temporal leadership to the Church.
- (b) The discussion of topics impacting on the vision and policies of the Church that Conference believes should be brought to the attention of the entire Church.
- (c) The review and adoption or otherwise of strategies for the pursuit of the vision, purposes and policies of the Church, as proposed by Governance Board.
- (d) The review and adoption or otherwise of the procedures and policies approved by the Governance Board for the governance and management of the Church,
- (e) The appointment of the following positions, working groups and committees:
  - (i) The President (by election)
  - (ii) The Lay Leader (by election)



- (iii) The General Secretary, incorporating the Role of Secretary of Conference, designated annually by the Conference, one year in advance, on the nomination of the Governance Board
  - (iv) Chairperson of the Governance Board (upon nomination by the Governance Nominations Working Group)
  - (iv) Members of the Governance Board (by election from a panel of nominees provided by the Governance Nominations Working Group)
  - (vi) The Governance Nominations Working Group (for nominating members for the Governance Board)
  - (vii) The Nominations Committee (for nominating the President and Lay leader)
  - (viii) The Committee on Faith and Order ([see Chapter 24](#))
  - (ix) The Council on Social Responsibility ([See Chapter 30](#))
- (f) The receipt, assessment and adoption or otherwise of independent reports on the adequacy and functionality of the governance procedures of the Church as carried out by the Governance Board.
- (g) The receipt, assessment and adoption or otherwise of governance reports, including financial reports, from the Governance Board such that Conference can satisfy itself as to the ongoing suitability and effectiveness of the Governance structures of the church.
- (h) The receipt, assessment and adoption or otherwise of reports from the Connexional Team.
- (i) The receipt, assessment and adoption or otherwise of reports from relevant committees and working groups, where necessary, in so far as they affect the vision and overarching policies of the Church.
- (j) The hearing of appeals on decisions of the Governance Board that affect the vision and overarching policies of the church or in relation to matters of theological concern.
- (k) Memorials dealing with Conference-appropriate issues which have been placed before Conference through the Governance Board.

- (l) Changes to the Constitution or Manual of Laws of the Methodist Church in Ireland

### **The Ministerial Session**

**7.03** The Conference in its Ministerial Session shall consist of:

- (a) The President and the ministers appointed by the British Conference to accompany her/him.
- (b) All the elected and ex-officio ministerial members of the Representative Session.
- (c) Such other ministers in full connexion as shall have permission from their respective District Ministerial Synods to attend.

### The Representative Session

**7.04** As provided in the Constitution VI. (2) (b), "The Conference in its Representative Session consists of the President of the British Conference and the representatives appointed by that Conference, together with not less than 100, nor more than 150 ministers, and an equal number of lay members, elected or appointed in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Conference."

**7.05** The ministers shall consist of:

- (a) The President of the Methodist Church in Ireland,
- (b) The General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland,
- (c) The Ex-President of the Methodist Church in Ireland,
- (d) The Assistant Secretaries of the preceding Irish Conference,
- (e) The Representatives to the preceding British Conference, and to the ensuing British Conference,
- (f) The District Superintendents and the Secretaries of Districts,
- (g) The Ministerial Treasurers and Secretaries of the following Connexional Funds, where appointed:
  - Home Mission Fund
  - Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund
  - Children's Fund

- Chapel Fund and Property Board Development Account
- General Education Fund
- World Mission Partnership
- Child Care Society
- Methodist Youth and Children's Team
- Methodist Ministers' Medical Fund
- Statutory Trustees

- (h) The Registrar of Deeds and Documents (if an ordained minister),
- (i) The Committee Membership Secretary,
- (j) Ministers who have filled the office of President of the Church prior to 1995; after 1995 ministers who have filled the office of President of the Church following the completion of their Presidential year for a period of four years,
- (k) The Principal of Edgehill Theological College,
- (l) The Principal of Wesley College, Dublin (if an ordained minister),
- (m) The Principal of Gurteen College (if an ordained minister),
- (n) The Chair of the Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee,
- (o) Any minister of the Irish Conference serving as an officer of World Mission Partnership,
- (p) The Ministerial Connexional Secretary for Local Preachers,
- (q) The Conference Director of Music,
- (r) The Convenor of the Faith and Order Committee (if a minister),
- (s) All Superintendents of Circuits,
- (t) The ministers in full connexion, elected by the District Ministerial Synods according to the allocation printed in the Minutes of Conference.

**7.06** The lay members shall consist of:

- (a) The Lay Leader of the Conference
- (b) The two Irish Lay Representatives to the preceding British Conference,  
The two Irish Lay Representatives to the ensuing British Conference,
- (c) The Lay Treasurers of the following, where appointed:

- Home Mission Fund
  - Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund
  - Ministers' Children's Fund
  - Chapel Fund and Property Board Development Account
  - General Education Fund
  - World Mission Partnership
  - Methodist Women in Ireland
  - Child Care Society
  - Ministerial Training Fund
  - Statutory Trustees (2)
  - Methodist Youth and Children's Team
  - Council on Social Responsibility (2)
  - General Purposes Fund
  - World Development and Relief Fund
- (d) Lay Representatives nominated by Circuit Executives, as provided for in paragraph 7.08.
- (e) Three Youth Representatives, who shall not exceed twenty-eight years of age at the time of her/his selection, from each District, selected by the District Superintendent in consultation with the Irish Methodist Youth and Children's Team.
- (f) Lay Representatives to be elected by the Committees of the following Funds and Institutions from among their own members one each by-
- World Mission Partnership
  - Methodist Youth and Children's Team
  - Council on Social Responsibility
  - Audit, Risk and Budget Committee of the Governance Board
  - Statutory Trustees
  - Local Preachers' Committee
  - World Development and Relief
  - Wesley College, Dublin
  - Methodist College, Belfast
  - The Ministries Team
  - Gurteen College
  - two by - Methodist Women in Ireland

- (g) The Convenor of the Faith and Order Committee (if a layperson)  
The Chairperson of the Governance Board  
The Chairperson of the Property Board  
The General Secretary of the Irish Methodist Youth and Children’s Team (if a layperson).
- (h) Lay Representatives elected by the Governance Board in such numbers, with the foregoing, to complete the number required.
- (i) A lay Assistant Secretary of the preceding Conference
- (j) Three representatives nominated by the Pioneer Mission Team.

### Appointments to Conference

- 7.07** Lay representatives to Conference shall be those persons nominated by the Circuit Executives. Those eligible must be at least eighteen years of age and members of the Methodist Church for at least two consecutive years immediately preceding nomination. Circuit Executives shall also nominate persons as substitutes in case the first nominee is unable to attend. Superintendents of Circuits are required to inform the Secretary of the Conference of the names of the persons nominated and that such persons are prepared to attend.
- 7.08** Each Circuit with less than 500 members shall have one representative, and each Circuit with 500 or more shall have two representatives annually. The numbers of members for this purpose shall be those printed in the Minutes of the previous Conference and shall not include junior members.

### Supplemental Lists

- 7.09** The names of the four ministerial members who shall be next in order of voting to those elected by the District Ministerial Synod shall be forwarded from each District as a Supplemental List.
- 7.10** The Lay Supplemental List shall consist of those nominated as substitutes by the Circuit Executives.
- 7.11** The full Supplemental List of each District shall be sent to the Secretary of the Conference who shall summon representatives therefrom as vacancies occur.

### Mission Partners and Membership of Conference

- 7.12** All mission partners of the Irish Conference on furlough at the time of the meeting of the Conference shall be honorary members of the Conference,

entitled to all the privileges of the Representative Conference excluding the right to vote, while ministers shall also be entitled to full membership of the Pastoral Session of the Conference.

Mission partners thus becoming honorary members of the Conference shall be entitled to the usual hospitality and travelling expenses within Ireland, and the Committees of World Mission Partnership and Methodist Women in Ireland shall make similar provision for the lay mission partners. The foregoing provision as regards ministers shall only apply to those who have been received into full connexion.

The Governance Board shall in any case of doubt have the right to determine to which mission partners this provision shall apply.

## Officers of the Conference

**7.13 The President** - The duties of the President shall be to constitute the meetings of the Conference, to preside, to preserve order, to take the vote, to announce decisions, and generally to direct the business. He/she shall be installed at the opening of the Representative Session of the Conference according to the order approved by the Conference and contained within the appendices of the Manual of Laws.

## Nomination and Election of the President

**7.14** The President of the Conference shall be designated a year in advance, in the following manner:

- (a) Each District Superintendent, in consultation with the District Advisory Committee, shall appoint two ordained ministers and two lay persons to represent the District on a Nominations Committee. These, together with the President and the Secretary of the Conference and the officers of the Home Mission Department, shall form the Committee. The District Superintendents shall not be eligible to serve as District representatives. The Secretary of the Conference shall be the Convenor.
- (b) The Committee shall meet in the autumn of each year and thereafter if necessary to conduct its business. It shall submit to the Conference the names of three ministers in Full Connexion who have travelled at least ten years who have not retired nor are about to retire. The names of the three ministers nominated for the position of President of the Conference shall be printed in the Conference Agenda together with reasoned statements. The outgoing President and the President Designate shall not be eligible for nomination. To

these names the Conference may, if it desires, add other names. Further nominations shall have the prior approval of the nominee and be supported by six members of the Conference (three ministers and three laypersons). Those nominating additional candidates shall be responsible for the preparation of a reasoned statement of a similar nature to those produced by the Nominations Committee. From the list so provided the Conference shall by single transferable vote elect a minister who shall be designated as President for the second ensuing year. The appointment shall be ratified at the beginning of the following Conference.

- (c) Should the President so designated die during the year, or for any reason become incapable of undertaking the duties of the office, the person receiving the next highest number of votes in the vote for the President Designate during the previous Conference shall be regarded as the President Designate.
- (d) Any member of the Conference wishing to nominate for the office of President any minister of the Irish Conference serving outside Ireland shall notify the Secretary of the Conference one year in advance of such intention. The Governance Board shall then consider the financial obligations involved in such an appointment, and report to the Conference at which the nomination is made.

**7.15** During the interval between one Conference and another, the President of the Conference shall be the ex-officio Chairperson of all Connexional Committees of which he/she is a member, except in the case of those boards and committees to which the Conference has appointed a chairperson.

**7.16** If occasion shall arise for temporarily filling the place of the President of the Conference, the duties of the office shall be undertaken by a minister who has filled the office of President. The following shall be the order of precedence:

- (a) The President of the Conference for the previous year.
- (b) The ministers who have held the office of President in order of seniority according to the date of their occupation of that office, provided they are still in an appointment. If a minister has more than once filled the office, the date of her/his first having done so will determine the order of precedence.

**7.17** In the event of the death of the President, the minister entitled as aforesaid to occupy the office shall, for the remainder of the year, and until the appointment of a successor, have all powers, privileges, and authority attached to the office, and shall be responsible for its duties. In the event of a

prolonged illness of the President, these regulations shall apply to the extent and for the period that may be necessary.

- 7.18** The Conference shall appoint annually a President's Advisory Committee. It shall consist of the President and the Secretary of the Conference, together with two ministers and three lay persons, one of whom shall be the Lay Leader of the Conference. It shall have power to direct the Superintendent of a District to make enquiry and report to it concerning any matter on her/his District which it deems advisable.

The Committee shall inform the Governance Board as to any matters which pertain to the governance of the Church.

### The Secretary of the Conference

- 7.19** **The Secretary of the Conference** is the General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland who shall be designated annually by the Conference, one year in advance, on the nomination of the Governance Board. For non-Conference related matters, the Secretary of Conference shall be referred to as the General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland (abbreviated hereafter where appropriate to General Secretary). Each Conference shall ratify the appointment of the person so designated who must have completed at least fifteen years' travelling at the time of appointment. ([See also 9.14](#))

- 7.20** Assistant Secretaries and Letter Writers shall be appointed by the Conference in its Representative Session, to discharge such duties as the Conference, through its Secretary, may from time to time, determine. At the first election to the office of Assistant Secretary, the Secretary shall submit to the Conference the names of three suitable persons.

One of the Assistant Secretaries, and one of the Letter Writers, may be a lay person. The officers so elected shall hold office until a new election shall have taken place.

- 7.21** When a vacancy occurs in the office of Secretary of the Conference by death, resignation, illness, or any other cause, the President, on the advice of the President's Advisory Committee, shall appoint a suitably qualified ordained minister to serve as Secretary of the Conference until the ensuing Conference. The ordained minister so appointed shall be deemed and taken to be the Secretary of the Conference to all intents and purposes, as if he/she had been originally appointed to that office.



## The Lay Leader of the Conference

**7.22 The Lay Leader of the Conference** shall be elected by the Conference for a period of two years and designated one year in advance. The appointment shall be ratified at the beginning of the following Conference.

- (a) He/she shall be nominated by the Nominations Committee.
- (b) The Committee shall meet in the autumn and thereafter if necessary to conduct its business. It shall submit to the Conference the names of three laypersons who have been members of the Methodist Church for at least the previous ten years continuously at the time of nomination. The names of the three laypersons nominated for the position of Lay Leader of the Conference shall be printed in the Conference Agenda with reasoned statements. The outgoing Lay Leader shall not be eligible for nomination. To these names the Conference may, if it desires, add other names. Further nominations shall have the prior approval of the nominee and be supported by six members of Conference (three ministers and three laypersons). Those nominating additional candidates shall be responsible for the preparation of a reasoned statement of a similar nature to those produced by the Nominations Committee. From the list so provided the Conference shall, by single transferable vote, elect a layperson who shall be designated as Lay Leader of the Conference for the second next ensuing year.
- (c) Should the Lay Leader so designated die during the year, or for any reason become incapable of undertaking the duties of the office, the person receiving the next highest number of votes in the vote for the Lay Leader Designate during the previous Conference shall then be regarded as the Lay Leader Designate.

**7.23** If occasion shall arise for temporarily filling the place of the Lay Leader of the Conference, the duties of the office shall be undertaken by a layperson who has filled the office of Lay Leader. The following shall be the order of precedence:

- (a) The previous Lay Leader of the Conference.
- (b) The laypersons who have filled the office of Lay Leader of the Conference in order of seniority according to the date of their occupation of that office, provided they are still resident in Ireland and members of the Methodist Church. If a layperson has more than once filled the office, the date of her/his first having done so will determine the order of precedence.

**7.24** In the event of the death of the Lay Leader, the layperson entitled as aforesaid to occupy the office shall, for the remainder of the period of office, and until the appointment of a successor, have all the powers, privileges and authority attached to the office and shall be responsible for its duties. In the event of a prolonged illness of the Lay Leader, these regulations shall apply to the extent and for the period that may be necessary.

**7.25** The duties and responsibilities of the Lay Leader shall include the following:

- (a) to be involved in the service for the installation of the President of the Conference.
- (b) to have a place on the Conference platform each year.
- (c) to introduce the Conversation on the Work of God at Conference.
- (d) to be a member of the President's Advisory Committee during her/his period of office.
- (e) to perform such other duties as may from time to time be deemed as necessary by the Conference.

### **Reports for the Conference**

**7.26** All reports for the Conference, together with the annual statistics and the names of the members of the Representative Session, shall be printed for the use of, and sent to, all members of the Conference and to all ministers in full connexion, at least three days before the time of meeting.

### **Daily Record and Journal of the Conference**

**7.27** A Daily Record shall be kept by one of the Assistant Secretaries, comprising an exact record of all the business of the Conference. The Record of each day shall be read to the Conference at the first sitting of the day following or attested by two ministers and one lay member appointed by the Conference.

**7.28** All resolutions and orders touching elections, admissions, expulsions, consents, dispensations, delegations, or appointments and acts whatsoever of the Conference, shall be entered and written in the Journals of the Conference, which shall be kept for that purpose. The Journal of the Ministerial Session shall be kept separate from the Journal of the Representative Session. (See Constitution, Section VI, Paragraph 8).

### **Entries in the Printed Minutes**

**7.29** The Secretary of the Conference shall have discretionary power regarding the entry in the printed Minutes of Conference unless in such cases as the mover of any resolution asks for the direction of the Conference regarding such entry.

### **Pastoral Efficiency**

**7.30** At least one session of the Ministerial Conference shall be set apart for the consideration of matters affecting pastoral efficiency, and a committee shall be appointed annually to arrange for the subjects to be discussed. The committee shall also determine the theme and the writer of a Pastoral Address. This Address shall be submitted to the following Conference and as approved, shall be read at a suitable date to each congregation.

### **Expenses of Ministers attending the Conference**

**7.31** The travelling expenses of Ministers attending the Conference shall be at a rate to be determined from time to time by the Conference.

## **General Rules of Procedure**

**7.32** All votes of the Conference shall be taken by a show of hands, unless the Conference shall otherwise determine; and, in all business relating to matters of administration, a majority of those present and voting shall be necessary and sufficient to decide the question.

**7.33** All elections by the Conference shall be by ballot. A clear majority of the votes cast shall be necessary and sufficient in every case.

**7.34** The Conference shall annually appoint a Committee of Scrutineers. Their report shall state the total number of votes cast on each occasion and shall fully account for those votes. They shall retain the voting papers until their report has been accepted. They shall bring to the notice of the Conference any irregularities in practice and procedure.

**7.35** Business shall be presented to the Conference in one of the following forms:

A **Memorial**, which is a request for action to be taken by the Conference, presented by a District Synod, a Circuit Executive, a member or members of the Methodist Church in Ireland and submitted to the Secretary of the

Conference prior to the date of the Spring Meeting of the Governance Board, or by two members of the Conference when it is in session, submitted to the Secretary of the Conference not later than the time stated in the Conference Agenda;

A **Resolution**, which is a statement recommending an action by the Conference, presented by a Committee of the Conference and printed in the Conference Agenda;

A **Notice of Motion**, which sets out, one year in advance, a proposed amendment to the Constitution of the Church or its Courts and which is printed in the Conference Agenda;

A **Special Resolution**, which is a resolution to alter or amend the Constitution of the Church, created when an appropriate Notice of Motion has been accepted by the Conference;

An **Emergency Resolution**, which, the permission of the Conference having been given, is submitted in writing, and signed by six members of the Conference, on a matter of significant importance which has arisen after the time has expired for the submission of Memorials by members of the Conference.’

Every resolution or amendment, not printed in the Conference Agenda, shall, before it is admitted for discussion, be presented in writing and in duplicate, for use by the President and the Secretary of the Conference.

**7.36 (a) The process by which the Constitution of the Church may be altered or amended shall be as follows:**

A Notice of Motion of a Special Resolution setting out the proposed alteration or amendment, having been printed in the Conference Agenda, shall be presented to the Conference.

At the following Conference a vote shall be taken on the proposed alteration or amendment. Provided that three-fourths of the members present and voting vote in favour, the Special Resolution shall proceed to the following Conference.

At that Conference a second vote shall be taken on the Special Resolution. Provided that not less than three-fourths of the members present and voting vote in favour and also, provided that not less than one-half of the total members of the Conference are present and voting, the Special Resolution

shall be regarded as having been accepted and the Constitution of the Church duly altered or amended.

The President and the Secretary of the Conference for the time being shall certify copies of the Special Resolution and submit these for enrolment as specified in paragraph 4 of the Methodist Church in Ireland Act (1928).

- (b) The process by which the Courts of the Church may be altered or amended shall be as follows:

A Notice of Motion setting out the proposed alteration or amendment, having been printed in the Conference Agenda, shall be presented to the Conference.

At the following Conference a vote shall be taken on the proposed alteration or amendment. Provided that a majority of the members present and voting vote in favour, the alteration or amendment shall be regarded as accepted and the Manual of Laws altered or amended accordingly.

- 7.37** The Conference shall appoint in each Session a Memorials Committee which shall consider during the ensuing year all memorials and any matters remitted by the Conference. It shall also advise the Conference regarding any matters which ought to be considered at a private session. The Committee shall report its recommendations in the Conference Agenda.

To this Committee shall be added the Superintendent of any District from whose Synod a Memorial is to be considered by the Committee. If unable to attend, the District Superintendent shall nominate a substitute.

Memorials should reach the Secretary of the Conference prior to the date of the Spring meeting of the Governance Board.

All Memorials presented during the Conference shall be submitted to the Committee for judgment as to their competence for debate and, if in order, shall be moved in the Conference by their proposer and seconder.

In doubtful cases the decision of the President for the time being shall determine to which Session the memorial or resolution belongs.

- 7.38** A memorial may be addressed to the Conference by any member or members of the Methodist Church, on any subject affecting her/his or their Church relations or interests. Such memorial must be forwarded to the Secretary of the Conference prior to the Spring meeting of the Governance Board, except

in cases where the circumstances which occasion the memorial arise after that date.

- 7.39** Visitors shall be permitted to be present during the Sessions of the Representative Conference, except at such times as the Conference shall otherwise determine.

### **Quorum**

- 7.40** If at any time during a Session of Conference, the attention of the President is called to the fact that a quorum, as defined in the Constitution, Section VI. Sub-Section (7) paragraph (vi) is not present, the members who are in attendance shall not transact any further business until there be a quorum.

### **Rules of Debate**

- 7.41** As much of the business of the Conference is conducted in the form of conversations, Rule (m) shall not apply, except when a formal resolution has been duly placed before the Conference.
- (a) The President shall decide all questions of order; shall see that order is maintained in the proceedings, and that the rules for the regulation of business are observed. No discussion shall be brought to a conclusion contrary to the will of the Conference.
  - (b) The President shall have a casting vote in addition to her/his vote as a member of the Conference.
  - (c) When any member wishes to address the Conference he/she shall rise and address the President but shall not proceed until the President calls upon her/him.
  - (d) No member shall remain standing during a discussion, except the member addressing the President.
  - (e) No member shall speak more than once on the same question without leave of the Conference, except as provided for in the Preamble and in Rules (f) and (q).
  - (f) The mover of a substantive resolution shall have a right of reply, but not the mover of an amendment. The reply must be limited to answering the arguments advanced against the motion.

- (g) Every motion and amendment shall be handed in writing to the Secretary at the time the proposition is made.
- (h) Motions of which due notice has been given shall, unless in special cases, be dealt with in connection with the business of the departments to which they relate or refer.
- (i) When a resolution or amendment has been moved and seconded, it shall not be withdrawn without the consent of the Conference.
- (j) The seconder of a resolution may reserve her/his speech, subject to the operation of Rule (n).
- (k) The Report of a Committee officially presented, shall be received by the Conference on the motion of the Convenor, or of someone acting on her/his behalf, and its resolutions shall then be moved.
- (l) All speeches following the presentation of Reports to the Conference shall be limited to five minutes, or as determined by the Conference.
- (m) No motion on any other subject shall be submitted until that which is under consideration has been disposed of by permitted withdrawal, adoption, or rejection, or by one of the following methods:
  - (i) Amendment of the subject matter, either by varying the terms, or by omission, or addition.
    - Should an amendment be carried, it becomes the substantive motion, and an amendment thereto may be proposed. If no further amendment be proposed, the amendment which has become the substantive motion, shall be put without further discussion.
    - Should the amendment be lost, and no further amendment be proposed, the original motion shall be put without further discussion.
    - A second amendment shall not be submitted until the first be disposed of, but any speaker may give notice of her/his intention to propose a second amendment if the first should not be carried.
  - (ii) The adoption of any of the following motions, which would be in order, whether a motion, or a motion with amendment, were before the Conference:

- "The Previous Question"-which shall be put to the Conference in the following form:

"That the resolution (or resolution and amendment) before the Conference be not put." This may be discussed concurrently with such resolution or amendment.

- "The Order of the Day," i.e., that the next business as ordered by the Conference be now taken.
- The postponement of the question either to a definite time, or to a time to be hereafter fixed.
- Reference to a Committee.

(iii) Adjournment-

- Of the debate.
  - Of the Conference.
- (n) A motion-"that the vote be now taken"-may with the assent of the President, be made by any member, but no discussion shall be allowed thereon. If the motion should be carried by a majority of not less than two-thirds of those voting, the President shall forthwith call upon the member, if any, who may have the right of reply, and immediately after the reply shall put the question.
- (o) At the close of a discussion the President shall request the members to be seated, and the resolution, or the resolution and the amendment, as the case may be, shall be read before being put to the vote, the vote on the amendment to be taken first.

No member shall speak after the President has risen to put the question to the Conference until a vote has been taken.

- (p) A motion to rescind a resolution of the Conference can be submitted only after notice duly given.
- (q) A member may raise a point of order when he/she deems the rules of debate, or the regulations of the Conference, to have been violated. He/she must submit the point of order to the President. Upon the question of order being raised, the member addressing the Conference shall take her/his seat and retain it until the point of order is decided.



- (r) A member who thinks he/she has been misrepresented by a speaker may, by the indulgence of the Conference, interrupt to correct the speaker, but must not enter into argument.
- (s) As the dignity and efficiency of the Conference depend largely on the order maintained, it is the duty of members to give quiet and respectful attention to the business in hand, and any member who persistently offends in this respect is liable to be admonished from the Chair.
- (t) Questions which relate to the rights and privileges of the Conference, or of individual members thereof, or to the order of business, shall have precedence.

### **Appointment of District Superintendents and Secretaries of Districts**

- 7.42** (a) District Superintendents shall be appointed by Conference in accordance with the provisions set by the Conference.
- (b) The Conference directs that the appointment of a District Superintendent shall be for a period of seven years. During the sixth year, the District Superintendent Selection Panel shall review the appointment and, in appropriate circumstances, recommend to the Conference that the appointment be extended for a further three years. After leaving the office of District Superintendent, a minister may not be reappointed to that office for a further five years.
- 7.43** Secretaries of Districts shall be appointed by the Conference annually, on the nomination of the respective District Superintendents.

### **Offices Becoming Vacant in the Course of the Year**

- 7.44** The following offices have special provision made for the supply of vacancies occurring therein:
- A District Superintendent and a Secretary of a District.
  - A Treasurer and a Secretary of a Connexional Fund or Committee.

When a vacancy occurs in any of these offices by death, resignation, illness, or any other cause, it shall be supplied until the ensuing Conference, as follows:

- (a) In the case of a District Superintendent, the President, on the advice of the Connexional Team, shall appoint an ordained minister of the District to serve as Temporary District Superintendent on a part-time basis until a new District Superintendent is appointed by Conference; in the case of a Secretary of a

District, the District Superintendent shall appoint a replacement to serve until the ensuing Conference.

- (b) In the case of a Treasurer of a Connexional Fund, Department, or Committee, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the surviving Treasurer, if any, and if there be no surviving Treasurer, the President of the Conference shall fill the office in accordance with the vote of the Committee taken by post, unless in her/his judgment, the committee should meet for the purpose.
- (c) In the case of a Secretary of a Connexional Fund, Department, or Committee, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the Ministerial Treasurer of the Fund or Committee, where such exists, provided that if the office be one to which an appointment is made in the Stations, the President of the Conference shall have power to appoint an assistant to the Treasurer for the remainder of the year. If there be no Treasurer of the committee concerned, the President of the Conference shall fill the office in accordance with the vote of the committee, to be taken by post, unless in her/his judgment the committee should meet for the purpose.

### **Relationship with the British Conference**

**7.45** The following agreement has been made with the British Conference regarding the status of Irish Methodist Ministers in connection with the Conference of the Methodist Church in Great Britain:

- (a) Ministers of the Irish Conference admitted into full connexion with the Methodist Church in Ireland, whether before or since the passing in Northern Ireland of the Methodist Church in Ireland Act (Northern Ireland) 1928 and in the Republic of Ireland the Methodist Church in Ireland Act 1928, shall be recognised and regarded as ministers of the Methodist Church in Great Britain admitted into full connexion.
- (b) Ministers and lay persons of the Methodist Church in Ireland may be appointed members of the Missionary Committee or of any other committee of the Conference of the Methodist Church in Great Britain, as that Conference may determine.
- (c) Ministers of the Irish Conference, who, under the provisions of these clauses, are recognised and regarded as ministers of the Methodist Church admitted into full connexion shall be subject to the rules and discipline of the Conference of the Methodist Church while filling any appointment in Great

Britain or serving in any of the overseas mission stations of the Methodist Church.

- 7.46** Any minister in full connexion with another Methodist Conference who is permitted by that Conference to serve or reside in Ireland may, on application to and approval by the Irish Conference, be regarded as being in full connexion with the Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland, subject to her/his acceptance and observance of the discipline of the Conference and such other conditions and limitations as that Conference may impose. The recognition as being in full connexion shall be reviewed annually.

### **Representatives to the British Conference**

- 7.47** In the Constitution Deed of the Methodist Church of Great Britain, it is provided that the Irish Conference shall be represented in the British Conference by the President and Secretary of the Conference and two lay representatives.

The Conference, desiring to maintain some measure of continuity in its representation to the British Conference, directs that its representatives shall be appointed as follows:

- (a) The President of the Conference and the Secretary of the Conference shall be ex-officio representatives as provided by the Deed of Union.
- (b) Two lay representatives shall be elected after nomination, by ballot, from the lay members of the Irish Conference. They shall be elected at the Irish Conference meeting one year prior to the British Conference which they are to attend. A lay representative who has been elected and attended, shall not be eligible for a subsequent election.
- (c) The President shall have power to fill any vacancies which may occur in the Irish representation owing to death, illness, or other cause, between the meeting of the Irish Conference and the meeting of the British Conference.

### **The Connexional Team**

- 7.48** (a) The Connexional Team shall consist of the following members:
- The President of the Conference
  - The Lay Leader of the Conference

- The General Secretary
- The Ex-President of the Conference
- The President-Designate of the Conference
- The immediate past Lay Leader or Lay Leader-designate
- The District Superintendents
- The Director of the Ministries Team (Ministries Team Leader)
- The General Secretary of the Home Mission Department, when in a full-time separated appointment
- The General Secretary of the Irish Methodist Youth and Children’s Department
- The Chair of the Audit Risk and Budget Committee

The Governance Board shall appoint the Secretary and Convenor of the Connexional Team.

The General Secretary shall have responsibility for ensuring that all of the members of the Connexional Team fulfil their designated responsibilities.

- (b) The following subgroup of the Connexional Team shall have exclusive responsibility with regard to all matters concerning the stationing of ministers and probationers: The President of the Conference, the Lay Leader of the Conference, the General Secretary, the President-Designate of the Conference, the District Superintendents, the Director of the Ministries Team (Ministries Team Leader), and, when in full-time, separated appointment, the General Secretary of the Home Mission Department.

**7.49** The Connexional Team has the following responsibilities:

- (a) To coordinate and align vision and enable its members to exercise their executive responsibilities consistently across the Connexion;
- (b) To help enable the Connexion to maintain its Methodist ethos and links to its historic Methodist roots;
- (c) To support and resource local Circuits and Societies;
- (d) To allocate the District Home Mission budget among the Districts, for use on the District as determined by the District Superintendent in consultation with the officers of the Home Mission Department;
- (e) To facilitate regular listening opportunities across the Connexion which enable members of the Methodist community to share their joys, concerns, feelings and ideas concerning the church and world;

- (f) To support and assist its members in their individual responsibilities overseeing the various aspects of the Connexion;
- (g) Through its stationing subgroup, to recommend to the Ministerial Session of Conference the stations of ministers and probationers for the ensuing year;
- (h) If required under [subparagraph 10.07 \(c\)](#) below, to appoint annually a District Lay Leader, on the nomination of the District Superintendent;
- (i) To hear and decide appeals from Circuit Executives or Circuit Superintendents regarding decisions made by District Superintendents which impact them;
- (j) To report through the Governance Board to Conference.

**7.50** Early in September each year the stationing subgroup of the Connexional Team will meet to consider:

- (a) The appointment of ministers who, following Stationing Review, may be due for a change of appointment at the ensuing Conference.
- (b) The appointment of ministers who have requested a change of appointment at the ensuing Conference, or whose Circuit Executives have requested a change.
- (c) The appointment of ministers who are returning from service overseas or from service with an external organisation.
- (d) The appointment of ministers transferring from other Conferences or Churches.
- (e) The appointment of students who will be completing initial training at the ensuing Conference.
- (f) The appointment of those ministers for whom the Committee may consider a change would be desirable in the best interests of the ministers concerned and of the work on the Circuits.

**7.51** The stationing subgroup of the Connexional Team is authorised to act upon the recommendation of the District Superintendents with regard to ministers seeking to retire at the ensuing Conference.

**7.52** (a) The stationing subgroup of the Connexional Team shall meet as often as required during the year. Every effort shall be made to assess the requirements of the Circuits and the aptitudes, interests and skills of ministers.

(b) The stationing subgroup of the Connexional Team is authorised not only to discuss appointments for the ensuing Conference but also to look forward to the requirements of following years.

- 7.53** By the end of February each year a list of the appointments to be proposed to the ensuing Conference shall be sent to every minister and Circuit Steward. Before such a list is published every minister who is to be transferred to a new appointment at the ensuing Conference shall be informed personally by the District Superintendent regarding her/his transfer.
- 7.54** In the event of an unexpected situation arising between the end of February and the meeting of the annual Conference likely to require an alteration in the proposed list of appointments the stationing subgroup of the Connexional Team shall meet as required to deal with the matter.
- 7.55** The reading of appointments shall take place at a Ministerial Session of the Conference before the first Session of the Representative Conference when the Secretary shall read the list of Circuits and the appointments in their order. At this reading any minister who so desires may make a statement concerning her/his appointment, but no discussion shall take place, nor shall any changes in appointments be made except in those cases which the Conference by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting may determine to reconsider.
- 7.56** A Circuit Executive may also make a statement concerning a proposed change of appointment on the same basis as outlined for ministers in the previous paragraph, but such a statement may only be presented on behalf of a Circuit Executive by a minister chosen by them, and who is a member of the Ministerial Session of the Conference. Any Circuit proposing to make such a statement must give a minimum of three days' notice in writing to the Secretary of the Conference.
- 7.57** The appointments shall be solemnly confirmed by a standing vote on the motion of the Secretary and the Ex-President.
- 7.58** In the case of an emergency arising during the Conference the stationing subgroup of the outgoing Connexional Team shall remain constituted until the end of the Conference.

### **Removal Expenses of Ministers**

- 7.59** Removal expenses shall be paid by the General Purposes Fund to all ministers changing Circuits on conditions determined by the Governance Board.

**7.60** When a minister retires legitimate removal expenses shall be paid by the General Purposes Fund. This shall also apply to the widows of those ministers who die before reaching retirement.

## CHAPTER 8 - CONNEXIONAL AND OTHER COMMITTEES

### **Appointment of Committees and working groups**

**8.01** The Governance Board, acting under the delegated authority of the Conference, may appoint such Connexional Committees, ordinary Committees or Working Groups as may be necessary, or as may be directed by Conference, for Connexional and other purposes, and may determine, amend or alter the constitution, power and duties of such committees in so far as their constitution is not fixed by trust deed. The names of all serving members shall be noted in the Conference Agenda.

### **Committee Membership Policy**

- (a) Members of committees and working groups are appointed by the Governance Board on the nomination of the General Secretary or based on proposals submitted by outgoing committees per sec 8.03 below.
- (b) The General Secretary shall take the following into account when making nominations to committees and working groups:
  - (i) the geographical representation on the committee
  - (ii) the special fitness of those selected for assisting in the work for which the Committee is responsible
  - (iii) the maintenance of a proper balance of age and gender in respect of both ministers and lay persons
- (c) The Governance Board may accept, alter or amend the committees submitted to it.
- (d) Should any of those nominated for a committee or working group decline to serve, or should vacancies occur through other causes, the General Secretary shall submit other names to the Governance Board to fill the vacancies thus created.



- (e) The Secretaries of committees and working groups shall annually submit to the General Secretary a list of the names of those proposed for committee membership for the ensuing year.
- (f) The recommended length of committee membership is three years, with a possible extension of three years.

### **Method of Election**

**8.03** The members of each committee, other than the ex-officio members, shall retire each year, and the Spring meeting thereof shall nominate the requisite number of ministers and lay persons to constitute, with the ex-officio members, the committee for the ensuing year.

- (a) In such nomination regard shall be had to:
  - (i) the representation of every District on the committee.
  - (ii) the special fitness of those selected for assisting in the work for which the Committee is responsible.
  - (iii) the maintenance of a proper balance of age and gender in respect of both ministers and lay persons.
- (b) Outgoing members of the committee shall be eligible for nomination if they have attended at least one-fourth of the meetings of the committee held during the two years then ending.
- (c) No minister or lay person shall be eligible for membership, other than ex-officio membership, of more than three of these committees.
- (d) Nothing in this method of election shall interfere with the power of the Conference to accept, alter, or amend the committees submitted to it.

### **Convenors of Committees**

**8.04** The Secretary of a Committee or Working Group shall be the Convenor thereof.

Whenever a vacancy occurs in the convenorship of a committee, the Governance Board shall, from amongst the members of the Committee, appoint a Convenor, who shall act until the ensuing Conference.

### **Meeting of Connexional Committees**

**8.05** The times and places of meeting of Connexional Committees shall be as printed from year to year in the Minutes of Conference. Should occasion arise requiring a special meeting of any committee, the General Secretary, on the request of the officers of the committee, may direct such special meeting to be summoned.

## CHAPTER 9 - THE GOVERNANCE BOARD, CONNEXIONAL BOARDS AND THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND.

### **The Governance Board**

**9.01** The Governance Board of the Methodist Church operates under the delegated authority of Conference to act as the body responsible for the day-to-day control, direction, administration and management of the affairs of the Church. The Governance Board is answerable in all things to Conference and shall report annually to Conference on the conduct of its affairs.

(a) The Governance Board shall always act to ensure that all elements of the Church are focussed on supporting and enabling the attainment of the vision of the Church as set out by Conference.

(b) The Governance Board shall be mindful always of the distinction in roles between itself and Conference and shall ensure that all matters pertaining to Conference's role shall be brought before Conference for consideration.

(c) The Governance Board is the legal successor to the General Committee and all references in deeds or documents referring to the General Committee shall now apply to the Governance Board.

**9.02** The Governance Board shall be constituted as follows:

(a) Ex-Officio members:

- The President of the Conference
- The Lay Leader of the Conference
- The General Secretary
- The Ex-President of the Conference

- The President-Designate of the Conference
- The Chair of the Standing Committee of the Statutory Trustees

(b) A Chairperson, appointed by the Conference

(c) Five lay members elected by the Conference, each of whom shall have been members of the Methodist Church in Ireland for at least five years.

(d) Three ordained ministers elected by the Conference, each of whom shall have travelled for at least five years.

**9.03** The method of nomination to the Governance Board, except as regards ex-officio members, shall be as follows:

(a) Each year Conference will appoint a Governance Nominations working group, to be convened by the General Secretary.

(b) The Chairperson of the Governance Board shall be appointed by Conference upon nomination by the Governance Nominations working group, and may be reappointed annually, subject to the Governance Board Member term limits detailed below.

(c) The lay and ministerial members of the Governance Board shall be elected by Conference from a panel of nominees put forward by the Governance Nominations working group.

(d) The Governance Board shall have power to fill any vacancy that may occur by death or incapacity of any member of the Board during the year. Members so appointed shall serve until the following Conference when they may be included in the panel for election.

**9.04** Members of the Governance Board, apart from ex-officio members who serve for their term of office, shall serve a three-year term, subject to annual reappointment by Conference. By agreement of the other members of the Governance Board and the Conference, the term of any individual member may be extended for a further three years, giving a maximum term of six years. After serving for this three or six-year term, members will be ineligible for service on the Governance Board for a period of three years.

- 9.05** The Governance Board shall have the authority to appoint working groups or committees as required.
- 9.06** The Governance Board shall meet a minimum of eight times per year.
- 9.07** The Governance Board shall be responsible for the selection of additional Representatives to Conference, as required, to ensure, as far as possible, an equal number of Lay and Ministerial Representatives.
- 9.08** The General Secretary shall be the secretary and Convenor of the Governance Board. Acting as chief executive of the Church, the General Secretary shall present to the Board all reports and other business from Connexional Boards, Connexional Committees or other parties.
- 9.09** Nominations to Inter-Church meetings and consultations, etc., shall be submitted by interested departments to the Governance Board, which has the authority to sanction payment of related expenses from the General Purposes Fund.
- 9.10** The Governance Board is delegated by Conference to perform the following tasks:
- (a) In its operations, to seek to discern the will of God for the Methodist Church and prayerfully seek His guidance in all that it does.
  - (b) Act as the Charity Trustees for the Methodist Church in Ireland in both jurisdictions.
  - (c) Develop, implement and regularly review strategy for the pursuit of the vision for the Church, as set out by Conference.
  - (d) Exercise control and oversight over all the resources of the Church including financial assets, property, and other assets.

- (e) Be aware of and seek to ensure that other charities associated with the Methodist Church are in sympathy with the vision, strategy and objectives of the Church.
- (f) Exercise oversight of the following, who will report to the Governance Board at least annually:
  - (i) Connexional Team
  - (ii) Statutory Trustees
  - (iii) Connexional Boards of the church
- (g) Exercise oversight of and receive reports from committees and working groups as required.
- (h) Have overall responsibility for the terms of reference, aims, operational parameters, constitution and membership of all Connexional Boards, Committees, and working groups and shall exercise oversight and regular review of same.

In cases where a vacancy occurs, for whatever reason, in the position of Treasurer or Secretary of a Connexional Fund, Department or Committee, the following shall apply:

- (a) In the case of a Treasurer of a Connexional Fund, Department, or Committee, the duties of the office shall devolve upon the surviving Treasurer, if any, and if there be no surviving Treasurer, the Governance Board shall fill the office by appointment.
- (b) In the case of a Secretary of a Connexional Fund, Department, or Committee, the Governance Board shall ensure that the duties of the office shall devolve upon the Ministerial Treasurer of the Fund or Committee, where such exists, provided that if the office be one to which an appointment is made in the Stations, the Governance Board shall have power to appoint an assistant to the Treasurer for the remainder of the year. If there be no Treasurer of the committee concerned, the Governance board shall fill the office by appointment.

- (c) Ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for control and oversight of the financial management of the Church and its constituent bodies. The Governance Board shall have full authority in all financial matters affecting the Church and all Church funds shall fall under its remit. This authority shall be exercised with due regard to the duties and responsibilities of the Statutory Trustees in respect of funds for which they are responsible. Specific financial duties of the board will include the following: -
- (i) The annual appointment of external auditors to audit the consolidated accounts of the Methodist Church.
  - (ii) Ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for the preparation, endorsement and regular review of:
- (d) An annual budget for the Church including the annual Comprehensive Assessment
- (e) Budgetary targets versus actual expenditure
- (i) Regular assessment of the overall financial status of the Church and all its constituent funds.
  - (ii) Assessment and approval of the annual audited accounts of the Church.
  - (iii) Assessment and oversight of all and any matters affecting the finances of the Church, not already included in the above.
- (f) Appoint an Audit, Risk and Budget sub-committee to aid it in its financial duties and co-opt members for this sub-committee if required.
- (g) Act as the Employing Body for all staff directly employed by the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- (h) Ensure that appropriate policies and procedures are in place in relation to the treatment of ordained ministers and probationers.

- (i) Ensure the appropriate procedures are in place for developing and regularly reviewing a comprehensive risk register for the Church and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are put in place to deal with identified risks.
  - (j) Oversee and review the preparation of appropriate policies and procedures for all matters pertaining to the efficient and effective management of the Church.
  - (k) Oversee relationships with other Churches and external bodies
- 9.11** In regard to matters in which the legal rights of the Methodist people are involved, either in Northern Ireland, or in the Republic of Ireland, the Governance Board shall act on behalf of the Church.

### **The Connexional Boards**

- 9.12** The Governance Board shall have general oversight of all Connexional Boards.
- (a) The Connexional Boards shall present their overall strategies to the Governance Board and shall report regularly to the Governance Board.
  - (b) The Chairpersons of the Connexional Boards shall be appointed by the Governance Board for a period of three years, with a possible reappointment for a further three years, the maximum term of office being six years. The Connexional Boards shall appoint their own Secretaries.
- 9.13** Unless otherwise specified in the Manual of Laws, the constitution of a Connexional Board shall be:
- The President of the Conference
  - The General Secretary
  - One minister and one lay member to be nominated annually by each District Superintendent, in consultation with the District Advisory Committee
  - Six persons to be appointed annually by the Governance Board.



- A maximum of four persons may be co-opted by the Connexional Board.

## **The General Secretary**

**9.14** The Secretary of Conference is The General Secretary of the Methodist Church (abbreviated hereafter where appropriate to General Secretary) in Ireland and fulfils the function of chief executive of the Church. The General Secretary carries out her/his duties under the delegated authority of the Governance Board.

- (a) The General Secretary reports directly to the Governance Board and will be held accountable for her/his actions by the Governance Board.
- (b) In carrying out her/his duties, the General Secretary shall always act to enable the pursuit of the vision for the Church as laid down by Conference and strategies for the attainment of that vision as developed under the auspices of the Governance Board.
- (c) The General Secretary shall be mindful always of the necessity to bring matters pertaining to the fundamental vision and purposes of the Church, as set by Conference, firstly to the attention of the Governance Board and ultimately to Conference for their consideration.

**9.15** The General Secretary:

- (a) shall be designated annually by the Conference, normally one year in advance, on the nomination of the Governance Board;
- (b) must have completed at least fifteen years' travelling at the time of appointment.
- (c) shall serve for a period of seven years with a possible extension of up to three years.

**9.16** When a vacancy occurs in the office of General Secretary by death, resignation, illness, or any other cause, the President, acting on the advice of the Governance Board, shall appoint a suitably qualified ordained minister to serve as General Secretary and Chief Executive of the Church until the ensuing Conference. The ordained minister so appointed shall be deemed and taken to be the General Secretary of the Church to all intents and purposes, as if he/she had been originally appointed to that office.

**9.17** The General Secretary has responsibility for the following:

- (a) The central mission of the Church, by actively seeking to discern the will of God for the Church and working to ensure that all aspects of the Church, from local societies to central administration and the governance bodies, reflect that will and adhere to the priorities that flow from it.
- (b) The Governance Board, as follows:
  - (i) To act as Secretary and Convenor of the Governance Board.
  - (ii) With the Chairperson, to prepare the Agenda for Governance Board meetings.
  - (iii) To prepare or collate reports from all areas of the Church for presentation to the Governance Board, ensuring that the Board has all the information required to carry out its responsibilities and make informed decisions.
  - (iv) To ensure the decisions of the Governance Board are put into effect.
  - (vi) To ensure that the Governance Board has all the necessary information to fully comply with its obligations as the Charity Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- (c) The Connexional Team, by ensuring that the Connexional Team and its individual members fulfil the responsibilities entrusted by Conference.
- (d) Administration:
  - (i) Guiding the Courts of the Church in decisions relating to policy and laws.

- (ii) Ensuring compliance with the Methodist Church in Ireland Acts, the Constitution of the Methodist Church in Ireland and the Manual of Laws.
  - (iii) Ensuring strict compliance throughout the Connexion with civic rules and legislation.
  - (iv) Exercising management and oversight of the Churches' compliance with the requirements of charity legislation and regulation of the respective jurisdictions.
  - (v) Exercising day-to-day management and oversight of all departments and elements of the Church; ensuring that all elements of the Church operate in line with accepted principles of good governance including Integrity, leadership, effectiveness, control, transparency and accountability.
  - (vi) Overseeing the organisation and conduct of the annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
  - (vii) Overseeing the work of the Finance Department, working closely with the Head of Finance to ensure that the finances of the Church are maintained on a sound footing and that the financial assets of the Church are fully utilised in pursuit of the vision and aims of the Church as set by Conference.
  - (viii) Working closely with the Head of Finance and the Senior Finance Team to prepare the annual budget for the Church, including the Comprehensive Assessment.
  - (ix) Overseeing the work of Connexional Boards, committees, working groups and Church departments.
  - (x) Overseeing the work of all other support departments and groups
- (e) Maintaining oversight of the Manual of Laws ensuring that it adequately and correctly reflects the will of Conference.

- (f) Acting as Secretary to the Statutory Trustees and fulfil the function of official registrar of deeds and documents.
- (g) Overseeing the continual development and review of the strategic direction and policies of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- (h) Overseeing a continuous process of risk assessment for the church and ensure that all practical measures are put in place to mitigate identified risks.
- (i) With the President and Lay Leader, acting as a principal representative of the Methodist Church in Ireland on external bodies and at external events, and ensuring that the Church is represented on those external bodies, meetings and representative sessions deemed necessary to enable the Church to be fully informed and engaged with the wider Methodist Church, other Churches and society in general.

**9.18** General Statement on use of the Church’s income and property

The income and property of the Methodist Church in Ireland (the “Church”) shall be applied solely towards the promotion of main object(s) of the Church as set forth in the Constitution and Manual of Laws. No portion of the Church’s income and property shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit to members of the Church . No charity trustee shall be appointed to any office of the Church paid by salary or fees or receive any remuneration or other benefit in money or money’s worth from the Church. However, nothing shall prevent any payment in good faith by the Church of:

- (a) reasonable and proper remuneration to any member or servant of the Church (not being a charity trustee) for any services rendered to the Church.
- (b) interest at a rate not exceeding 1% above the Bank of England interest rate (NI) or Euro Interbank Offered Rate (Euribor) (RoI) per annum on money lent by charity trustees or other members of the trust/body to the Church.
- (c) reasonable and proper rent for premises demised and let by any member of the Church (including any charity trustee) to the Church,

- (d) reasonable and proper out-of-pocket expenses incurred by any charity trustee in connection with their attendance to any matter affecting the Church.
- (e) fees, remuneration or other benefit in money or money's worth to any Company of which a charity trustee may be a member holding not more than one hundredth part of the issued capital of such Company;
- (f) the provision of accommodation and care for any charity trustee who is a Minister, provided that same is not made as a result of or in connection to their position as trustee;
- (g) reasonable remuneration to any charity trustee who is a Minister, provided that same is not made as a result of or in connection to their position as trustee;
- (h) Nothing shall prevent any payment by the Church to a person pursuant to an agreement entered into in compliance with the Charities Act (NI) or section 89 of the Charities Act, 2009 (as for the time being amended, extended or replaced).

#### **9.19 Dissolution**

If upon the winding up or dissolution of the Church there remains, after satisfaction of all debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever, it shall not be paid to or distributed among the members of the Church. Instead, such property shall be given or transferred to some other charitable institution or institutions having main objects similar to the main objects of the Church. The institution or institutions to which the property is to be given or transferred shall prohibit the distribution of their income and property among their members to an extent at least as great as is imposed on the Church under or by virtue of the Income and Property clause hereof.

The Church through its Governance Board shall select the relevant institution or institutions at or before the time of dissolution, and if and so far as effect cannot be given to such provisions, then the property shall be given or transferred to some charitable object with the agreement of the Charities Regulator. Final accounts will be prepared and submitted that will include a section that identifies and values any assets transferred along with the details of the recipients and the terms of the transfer.

#### **9.20 Powers of the Church**

The Church shall have the following powers:

- (a) To grant pensions, gratuities, allowances or charitable aid to any person who may have served the Church as an employee, or to the wives, husbands, children or other dependents of such person provided that such pensions,

gratuities, allowances or charitable aid shall be no more than that provided by a pension scheme covered by the legislation relevant to the jurisdiction and provided that such pension scheme has been operated by the Church and the beneficiary of the pensions, gratuities, allowances or charitable aid, or their spouse or parent, has been a member of the pension scheme while employed by the Church; and to make payments towards insurance and to form and contribute to provident and benefit funds for the benefit of any persons employed by the Church and to subscribe or guarantee money for charitable objects.

- (b) To invest in such ways as shall seem desirable to the Governance Board any moneys of the Church not immediately required for the use in connection with its Main Object and to place any such moneys on deposit with bankers and others; subject nevertheless as regards the making of investments to such conditions (if any) and such consents (if any) as may for the time being be imposed or required by law and subject also as hereinafter provided; prior permission to be obtained from the Revenue Commissioners where the Church intends to accumulate funds over a period in excess of two years for any purpose.

#### **9.21**

No amendment may be made by the Conference to the Church's charitable purposes that would cause the Methodist Church in Ireland to cease to be a charity at law.

## CHAPTER 10 - DISTRICTS

### District Ministerial Synods

- 10.01** The District Ministerial Synod is a meeting of the ordained ministers and probationers of the District.
- 10.02** The District Ministerial Synod shall consist of all ordained ministers and probationers within the District boundaries, as shown in the current List of Stations.
- 10.03** Ordained ministers and probationers who are serving as mission partners and in Ireland on furlough shall be invited to be present at the meeting of the Ministerial Synod of the District in which they are resident for the time being.
- 10.04** All ordained ministers and probationers, except retired ministers, are required to attend at their respective Ministerial Synods. No such minister or probationer shall absent himself/herself from the Ministerial Synod without the permission of the District Superintendent. This regulation shall be printed in the form summoning the ministers to the Synods. Probationers, whilst being required to attend, shall not have the right to vote.
- 10.05** District Ministerial Synod shall meet at least once each year, at a date and time arranged by the District Superintendent.

### District Advisory Committee

- 10.06** Each District Superintendent shall appoint a District Advisory Committee. It shall be composed of the District Superintendent, who shall preside at its meetings, the District Secretary, the District Local Preachers' Secretary, and the District Lay Leader (where one has been appointed), together with an additional two ministers and two lay persons. When, in the opinion of the District Superintendent, the matter to be dealt with refers to a minister it shall be dealt with by the ministerial members of the committee. All other matters shall be dealt with by both the ministerial and lay members of the committee. Should any of the members of this committee be concerned in the difficulty under consideration, or be unable to act, the District Superintendent shall appoint another in his/her place.

## Duties of District Superintendents

- 10.07** The District Superintendent act under the delegated authority of the Governance Board and shall:
- (a) encourage, enable, co-ordinate and facilitate mission in the Circuits of the District, in cooperation with the Circuit Executives and Circuit Superintendents;
  - (b) develop and implement vision for the District and, to that end, facilitate area or District-wide gatherings for strategic planning, fellowship and inspiration;
  - (c) in consultation with the District Advisory Committee and subject to the approval of Conference, develop structures for the District appropriate to its needs, including, where appropriate, the appointment of a District Lay Leader;
  - (d) in consultation with the officers of the Home Mission Department, utilise the District Home Mission budget to support mission and witness across the District;
  - (e) facilitate pastoral care among the ministers and vocational lay workers on the District, and their families, in conjunction with Circuit Superintendents and other colleagues;
  - (f) arrange for the holding of the Ministerial Synods on his/her District; preside over their deliberations, and see that business is transacted in due order;
  - (g) arrange meetings with the ministers and probationers on their District at least four times per year, including the District Ministerial Synod and including at least one individual meeting with each probationer or minister who has not yet retired;
  - (h) serve as the public representative of the District.
- 10.08** District Superintendents shall exercise careful supervision of the working of the Circuits under their jurisdiction. A District Superintendent shall visit any Circuit Executive or Church Council in the District when he/she considers it desirable. District Superintendents will be provided with Minutes of all Circuit Executive meetings on their District.
- 10.09** District Superintendents shall ensure that Connexional discipline is upheld in accordance with the processes laid out in this Manual of Laws. To this end, where matters likely to affect adversely the well-being of any Circuit on



his/her District are known to the District Superintendent, the following procedure shall be adopted:

- (a) The District Superintendent shall take such action as he/she may deem to be helpful to the promotion of peace and order, and to the faithful and judicious execution of the Church's discipline, visiting the Circuit and conferring with the Superintendent and those concerned should this seem advisable.
- (b) Where the District Superintendent considers the case sufficiently serious he/she shall confer with the District Advisory Committee, which shall decide what further action is necessary.
- (c) Where the advice of the District Advisory Committee has not been accepted the District Superintendent shall report the matter to the President's Advisory Committee and obtain its sanction for such action as may be considered necessary. Further disciplinary action, when necessary, shall be taken in accordance with the procedures set forth in the *Manual of Laws* and in the Policies and Procedures developed by the Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee and approved by the Governance Board.

In cases where the District Superintendent, or his/her Circuit, may be concerned, the President of the Church shall act as if he/she were Superintendent of the District.

**10.10** The District Superintendent shall:

- (a) represent the District on the Connexional Team;
- (b) ensure that Circuit questions are referred in a timely and correct manner to the appropriate Connexional committees;
- (c) ensure that Connexional policies are implemented on the District;
- (d) offer specific, individual skills as a resource to the Connexion, in consultation with the Connexional Team.

### **Appointment and Duties of Secretaries of Districts**

**10.11** Secretaries of Districts shall be appointed by the Conference on the nomination of the District Superintendents.

**10.12** It shall be the duty of the Secretary of a District, under the direction of the District Superintendent to:

- (a) notify the members of the District Ministerial Synod of the time and place of its meetings.
- (b) prepare lists of ministers from which the District Ministerial Synod is to elect representatives to the ensuing Conference.
- (c) send to the Secretary of the Conference a list in alphabetical order of all the ministerial representatives of the District to the ensuing Conference.
- (d) prepare complete minutes of the proceedings of the Ministerial Synods.
- (e) provide the District Superintendent with a complete copy of the minutes of the Ministerial Synod meetings.
- (f) send to the Secretary of the Conference complete copies of the minutes of the Ministerial Synod.
- (g) undertake such other responsibilities as may be agreed with the District Superintendent.

## CHAPTER 11 - CIRCUIT ORGANISATION

**11.01** The day-to-day affairs of societies and circuits are organised by Church Councils and Circuit Executives. Church Councils and Circuit Executives operate under the delegated authority of Circuit Superintendents who, in turn, operate under the delegated authority of District Superintendents supported by the Connexional Team. All operate under the delegated authority of the Governance Board, as prescribed by Conference. The following sets out the detail of Circuit organisation.

**11.02** The official meetings of a Circuit shall be:

The Congregational Meeting,  
The Church Council,  
The Circuit Meeting,  
The Circuit Executive,  
The Trustees' Meeting, where appropriate.

### **The Congregational Meeting**

**11.03** At least once each year, the Church Council shall arrange a Congregational Meeting for fellowship and inspiration.

**11.04** The Congregational Meeting shall:

- (a) Review the previous twelve months and celebrate advances made,
- (b) Set out goals for the next twelve months in the context of the vision laid down by Conference,
- (c) Discuss the vision of the Church for the ensuing five years,
- (d) Ratify the appointment of Church Officials upon the nomination of the Minister,
- (e) Elect members of the Church Council upon the nomination of the Minister, as required,
- (f) Through the Secretary convey to the Church Council for its consideration concerns expressed or recommendations made.

## The Church Council

- 11.05** The aim of every congregation is to glorify God through its worship and its witness within its community. Methodist congregations achieve this with the encouragement of, and by commitment to, the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- 11.06** To ensure that this aim is achieved, every Society shall be governed by a Church Council. (A Church Council may govern more than one Society.) The Council, acting under the delegated authority of the Circuit and District Superintendents shall:
- (a) Produce a succinct Mission Statement to encapsulate the direction the Church wishes to take, within the context of the overall vision of the Church as laid down by the Conference.
  - (b) Review this Mission Statement from time to time,
  - (c) Annually set achievable goals for the fulfilment of the Church's mission within the terms of the Mission Statement,
  - (d) Establish Working Groups, with clear guidelines and sufficient authority to achieve the specific goals assigned to them,
  - (e) Assist the members of the congregation in using their gifts and experience to serve the kingdom of God,
  - (f) Annually guide the congregation in celebrating the advances of the previous twelve months and in identifying the next steps in the fulfilment of its mission,
  - (g) Consider and promote the spiritual life of the Society,
  - (h) Promote and extend the mission of the Society in the local community,
  - (i) Encourage Council Members, through mutual consultation and prayer, to discharge their duties more effectively.
- 11.07** The Church Council shall also be responsible to the Circuit and District Superintendents and Governance Board for the oversight of the work of God in the Society, including:
- (a) Arrangements for worship,
  - (b) Pastoral care, nurturing, and discipling of the congregation,
  - (c) Identification of training needs and the implementation of training within the Society,

- (d) Reception, discipline, and exclusion of members as required by the laws of the Church ([see Chapter 2](#)),
- (e) Work with children and young people,
- (f) The role of the Society within the Circuit and the Connexion, including Connexional activities, publications, and funds,
- (g) Evangelism and witness of the society in the local community, including co-operation with other churches,
- (h) Arranging at least one Congregational Meeting each year, which shall be announced on the four Sundays prior to the meeting
- (i) Accountability to the Governance Board for the management of the funds held by the Society,
- (j) Maintenance, letting and insurance of all property entrusted to the Society, in line with the policies approved by the Governance Board, subject to such rights and obligations, if any, as may be vested in Local Trustees,
- (k) Communication with the congregation relating to the work of the Council.

**11.08** The Council shall meet at least four times each year. No meeting of the Council shall be convened without the prior approval of the Minister.

**11.09** The quorum required for a meeting of the Church Council shall be one-third of the total membership of the Council.

**11.10** The Council may appoint individual members of the Council or working parties, which need not be exclusively composed of members of the Council, to undertake specific tasks relating to the responsibilities of the Council.

- (a) The Council shall appoint at least one of its members to each working party.
- (b) Each individual or working party shall be given specific terms of reference and shall report to the Council.
- (c) The Council shall designate one of its members on each working party to report on its behalf to the Council.
- (d) Reports from individuals or working parties should be submitted in writing in advance of Council meetings.
- (e) A working party may, if circumstances warrant, be given powers to act on behalf of the Council and the Society within clearly specified parameters.

**11.11** The term “Church Council” shall henceforth be deemed to include the term “Leaders’ Meeting” where appropriate throughout the Manual of Laws.

### **Constitution of the Church Council**

**11.12** The Council shall be constituted as follows:

- (a) The **Minister** responsible for the Society, who shall preside at meetings of the Council, or delegate the responsibility of presiding to another minister or member of the Council,
- (b) **Other ministers and probationers** assigned by the Conference to the work of the Society,
- (c) The **Church Officials** ([as listed in para 11.22](#)),
- (d) The **elected members** ([as described in para 11.17-11.21](#)).

**11.13** Persons appointed by the Circuit who have a pastoral responsibility in the Society(ies) may be invited to give reports from time to time.

**11.14** The Circuit Superintendent shall be ex-officio a member of the Council.

**11.15** In the interests of continuity the retiring Society Steward shall be an ex-officio member of the Council for one year following his/her retirement from that office.

**11.16** Only Members of the Methodist Church in Ireland are eligible to be members of the Church Council.

#### *Elected Members*

**11.17** The number of **elected members** of the Church Council shall be a multiple of three not exceeding 18 as determined by the Council from time to time, bearing in mind the need adequately to reflect the nature of the congregation, while also seeking the smallest number consistent with the efficient oversight of the affairs of the Society.

**11.18** One-third of the elected members of the Council shall retire each year and normally shall not be eligible for re-election for at least one year.

**11.19** Early in each calendar year the Council shall appoint three of its members to constitute the Advisory Group to consult with the Minister on nominations and appointments for the ensuing year.

**11.20** The Minister shall, after consultation with the Advisory Group, nominate suitable Church Members to be listed on the ballot paper for election to the Council by the Congregational Meeting.

**11.21** In the event of a casual vacancy on the Council, the Council shall co-opt a Member of the Society to fill the vacancy until the next appropriate Congregational Meeting.

### *Church Officials*

**11.22** A Society shall have the following Church Officials, who shall normally hold office for three years:

(a) The **Society Steward**, who shall be regarded as the official lay representative of the Society and shall support and encourage the Minister(s) and congregation in the development of the Work of God. When necessary, the Society Steward may also serve as Secretary, but not as Treasurer or Property Steward.

(b) The **Treasurer**, who shall be responsible to the Council for all financial income of the Society, for its proper use or transmission as appropriate and for the prompt payment of all accounts. He/she shall keep accurate accounts and submit them for annual audit, according to the requirements of the Governance Board.

(c) The **Property Steward**, who shall be responsible to the Council for the proper maintenance of all property.

(d) The **Secretary**, who shall in conjunction with the Chairperson of the Council prepare the Agenda for meetings and issue notices in writing in good time and shall record the proceedings in a Minute Book for that purpose. He/she shall also act as Secretary to the Congregational Meeting.

**11.23** A **Society Steward-Designate** may be nominated one year in advance of a vacancy in that office and may attend Church Council meetings during the year but will not be eligible to vote.

### *Special Provisions for Small Societies*

**11.24** In Societies with worshipping congregations of up to about thirty people, the congregation itself may be the Church Council.

- (a) Such a congregational Church Council shall be subject to all provisions relating to Church Councils except as indicated below.
- (b) Notice of congregational Council meetings shall normally be given at least one week in advance and may be by pulpit announcement.
- (c) Congregational Council meetings may be held following Sunday worship, and all decisions must be minuted and the minutes confirmed and signed.
- (d) The quorum required for a meeting of a congregational Church Council shall be all those present at a meeting for which proper notice has been given, provided at least four adults from the Society are present.
- (e) The Council shall appoint three of its members to advise the Minister on the nomination of Church Officials.
- (f) Church Officials may, where necessary, be Members of other Societies.
- (g) The Council shall ratify the appointment of Church Officials upon the nomination of the Minister.
- (h) The Church Officials (in consultation with the Minister), or the Council itself, may designate persons in the congregation to undertake specific tasks.
- (i) The Church Officials, in consultation with the Minister, shall ensure that the congregational Church Council adopts and updates a Mission Statement, sets annual achievable goals, and discharges all responsibilities laid upon the Church Council.

### **The Circuit Meeting**

**11.25** In a Circuit there shall be a Circuit Meeting for the purpose of:

- (a) Providing mutual support and fellowship;
- (b) Electing Circuit Officials, upon nomination by the Superintendent Minister after consultation with the other Circuit Ministers and the current Circuit Officials.
- (c) Sharing stories of the work of God, thereby enabling Societies to learn from each other;
- (d) Passing on information to Societies from the Circuit, District or Connexion.



**11.26** The Circuit Meeting shall consist of:

- (a) Members of the Church Councils and the Working Parties thereof,
- (b) Members of the Circuit Executive,
- (c) Fully accredited local preachers in the active work,
- (d) Class Leaders or their equivalent,
- (e) Lay persons employed by the Circuit or its constituents in a pastoral capacity,
- (f) Members of the Circuit who are local trustees or who hold District or Connexional office or are members of District or Connexional committees, and
- (g) Ministers on the Circuit, including retired ministers and those without pastoral charge.

**11.27** The Superintendent Minister is responsible for ensuring that the Circuit Meeting is properly chaired.

**11.28** The Circuit Secretary shall act as secretary of the Circuit Meeting.

**11.29** The Circuit Meeting shall be held at least once a year, early in the Connexional year.

### **The Circuit Executive**

**11.30** In each Circuit there shall be a Circuit Executive for the purpose of deliberation and decision-making in relation to matters of Circuit responsibility.

**11.31** The Circuit Executive acts under the delegated authority of the Circuit and District Superintendents and shall have responsibility in relation to the following:

- (a) Co-ordination of the work of the Societies, ensuring the best possible delivery by the Circuit of the vision laid down by the Conference;
- (b) Ministerial and remunerated lay appointments in the Circuit;
- (c) Candidates for the ministry, upon nomination by the Superintendent;
- (d) Election of Circuit representatives to Conference;
- (e) Purchase and up-keep of manses on the Circuit in line with the policies approved by the Governance Board;
- (f) Trustees' business, where appropriate;

- (g) Local Preachers' business, where appropriate;
  - (h) Preparation of the annual Circuit and Society accounts and the preparation of an annual budget submission, in the format and according to the timetable laid down by the Governance Board;
  - (i) Management of Circuit accounts and oversight of society accounts;
  - (j) Applications from Societies for Connexional approval or for grants from Connexional bodies;
  - (k) Arrangement of Circuit Meetings;
  - (l) Assisting the Superintendent Minister in the nomination of Circuit Officials for election by the Circuit Meeting.
  - (m) Links with other churches.
- 11.32** The Circuit Executive will meet as necessary, at times and places determined by the Superintendent Minister, and as a minimum at least once each quarter.
- 11.33** The quorum required for a meeting of the Circuit Executive shall be one-third of all members.
- 11.34** The Circuit Secretary shall ensure that the proceedings of the Circuit Executive are duly recorded, and in consultation with the Superintendent Minister, summon the meeting and prepare the agenda.
- 11.35** The Circuit Executive shall be chaired by the Superintendent Minister or by another member of the Circuit Executive designated by the Superintendent Minister.
- 11.36** Within these parameters and the policies and procedures determined by the Governance Board, the Circuit Executive may establish its own procedures and structure for itself and the Circuit.

### *Constitution of the Circuit Executive*

**11.37** The Circuit Executive shall consist of:

- (a) Ministers appointed by the Conference to work on the various Societies of the Circuit;
- (b) Circuit Officials, as listed in para 11.39 below;
- (c) The Society Steward of each society;

- (d) One other representative of each Society designated by its Church Council.
- (e) Each trust shall have the right to have one representative at a meeting of the Circuit Executive at which matters relating to that particular trust property are on the agenda.
- (f) The Circuit Local Preachers' Meeting shall have the right to have one representative at a meeting of the Circuit Executive at which matters relating to Local Preachers are on the agenda.

### *Single Society Circuits*

**11.38** Where a Circuit consists of a single Society, the Congregational Meeting may undertake the responsibilities of the Circuit Meeting and the Church Council the responsibilities of the Circuit Executive, in which case the Circuit Officials shall be ex-officio members of the Church Council.

### *Circuit Officials*

**11.39** A Circuit shall have the following Officials, who shall normally hold office for three years:

- (a) **Circuit Steward**, who shall provide spiritual, pastoral and advisory support to the Superintendent Minister and shall be regarded as the official lay representative of the Circuit at civic and other appropriate occasions.
- (b) **Circuit Treasurer.**
- (c) **Manse Steward.**
- (d) **Circuit Secretary.**

A Circuit may also have an Assistant Circuit Steward or Circuit Steward-designate, as determined from time to time by the Circuit Executive.

**11.40** For legal purposes, Society Stewards shall also be considered Officials of the Circuit.

**11.41** The term "Circuit Executive" shall henceforth be deemed to include the term "Quarterly Meeting", where appropriate throughout the Manual of Laws.

### **Memorials from Circuit Executives**

**11.42** If the Circuit Executive in any Circuit is of opinion that it is desirable to address to the Conference a memorial on any connexional subject, [as set out in 7.35](#) and resolves to do so, the meeting may adopt and transmit to the Conference such a memorial.

- 11.43** Any member of such meeting who intends to propose that a memorial be presented to the Conference shall, at least three days previous to the day appointed for the holding of the meeting, give to the Superintendent of the Circuit notice of intention to do so, together with a copy, in writing, of the resolution intended to be proposed as the basis of such memorial, which copy of the resolution shall be read to the meeting by the Superintendent at an early period of its sitting. If the Circuit Executive approves the substance or principle of a resolution so brought forward, it can adopt, amend or reject the resolution, but no proposal of which such notice has not been given can be brought forward.
- 11.44** A memorial founded on such resolution, as approved or amended by a majority of the persons present, shall set forth in its preamble the names of those in attendance at the meeting, and shall be signed, within a week, by those who voted in favour of it. The Superintendent shall be responsible for its transmission to the Secretary of the Conference normally by the 31<sup>st</sup> March, but in exceptional circumstances not later than the day preceding the opening of the Conference.

N.B. The foregoing regulations do not apply to resolutions of Circuit Executives passed in the ordinary course of business with reference to Circuit affairs.

### **Mission Committees**

- 11.45** In each City or other Mission under the management of a Committee appointed by the Governance Board, all the powers, privileges and duties of a Circuit Executive may be exercised by such Committee, and an officer of the Mission, whose duties the Committee shall determine to be most closely related to those usually performed by a Circuit Steward, shall, for all purposes, rank as Circuit Steward. The Committee shall have power, on the nomination of the Superintendent of the Mission, to appoint all such officers as it may consider necessary for the work of the Mission. If the constitution of the Church Council is considered unsuitable for any Society comprised in the Mission, the Committee shall have power to alter the constitution to meet the requirements of the Society concerned, and to define the functions of the meeting so constituted.

### **Local Preachers' Meeting**

- 11.46** In every Circuit on which there are resident three or more Local Preachers, there shall be held, at least once a year a meeting, consisting of the:

Ministers, Probationers, Members of the Diaconal Order, Local Preachers and Local Preachers on trial.

**11.47** The business of the Local Preachers' Meeting shall be to:

- (a) appoint a Secretary from among the members of the Meeting.
- (b) arrange, under the direction of the Superintendent Minister, and for such a period as may be determined, a plan of the appointments to be supplied by the Local Preachers.
- (c) enquire into the efficiency and faithfulness of the Local Preachers on the Plan.
- (d) judge the suitability of persons nominated to be admitted as Local Preachers in training, or to be fully accredited as Local Preachers, and to receive or reject them [\(6A.04\)](#)
- (e) make general arrangements for the carrying on of the work, and for the increase of the efficiency of its members.

### **Trustees**

**11.48** The legal estate of or in churches, schools, manses or other Connexional property was formerly vested in local Trustees usually upon ordinary Connexional Trusts.

**11.49** By the Methodist Church in Ireland Acts, 1928, Statutory Trusts were adopted as a Schedule to these Acts, and it is anticipated that so far as possible all Connexional property will eventually be vested in these Trusts. Attention is drawn to the importance of seeing that the number of Trustees does not fall below the required minimum in the Deed.

**11.50** Under the Statutory Trusts, new Trustees should be appointed, not only in place of any who have died, but also in place of any Trustee who has resigned the office of Trustee or refused or has become incapable to act in the Trusts or has been resident out of Ireland for twelve months continuously or has become bankrupt or insolvent or has ceased to be a member of the Methodist Church in Ireland or has been called upon by the Governance Board to resign her/his office. In each case the reason for the omission of the name from the continuing Trustees should be signified in a recital contained in the new Deed.

**11.51** Where the Statutory Trusts have been adopted, when the number of Trustees has been reduced below four and the surviving Trustees have failed to make appointment within a period of twelve months, then it shall be lawful for the

Superintendent Minister of the Circuit to appoint new Trustees and the property shall be vested in such new Trustees jointly with the continuing Trustees, if any.

- 11.52** Inasmuch as existing Trust Deeds differ somewhat in their provisions for the appointment of new Trustees, reference should be had in every case to the Deed requiring renewal. If it provides that the surviving Trustees have the right of appointment, the names of the proposed new Trustees should be submitted to them with a view of obtaining their approval before the Deed is engrossed. This can be done either at a meeting duly summoned for the purpose, or by letter, to which a Form of Consent is appended.
- 11.53** If no special provision is made in the original Trust Deed for appointment of new Trustees, the direction of the Governance Board is that the selection of fit and proper persons shall be made by the Circuit Executive, on the nomination of the Superintendent of the Circuit.
- 11.54** All persons appointed as Trustees of any Connexional Trust Property shall be members of the Methodist Church.
- 11.55** Applications for permission to appoint new Trustees shall be made through the Property Board. If any grant is recommended toward the cost of the Deed it will be borne by the Property Board or the Home Mission Fund or the General Education Fund, according to the nature of the property vested. Before the work of appointing new Trustees is undertaken, the particulars set forth in the form of application must first have been approved by the Property Board.
- 11.56** If in the original Deed the number of Trustees has been either unnecessarily large or inconveniently small, in the appointment of new Trustees advantage may be taken of any provisions in existing Trustee Acts to diminish or to increase the number.

### Rules for Trustees' Meetings

- 11.57** Under the provision of the Statutory Trusts the Conference is empowered to make, from time to time, such rules and regulations for the holding, and conduct of all business at the Trustees' Meetings as it shall think fit, and from time to time to annul, amend and alter the same. In exercise of the power conferred upon it, the Conference has adopted the following rules and regulations with regard to Trustees' Meetings:

- (a) It is desirable that where practicable Trustees' Meetings shall be held at least once a year, and where this is not practicable the business of the Trustees shall be transacted by the Circuit Executive, at which meeting the trust shall have the right of one representative in accordance with [11.37\(e\)](#)
- (b) The Superintendent of the Circuit, or in her/his absence, some other minister on the Circuit nominated by her/him, shall be the Chairman of the Trustees' Meeting and, if the Trust property is vested on the Statutory Trusts, shall have the right to an original and a casting vote.
- (c) A quorum for a Trustees' Meeting shall be one-third of the surviving and continuing Trustees, provided that the number be not less than three, but in all cases in which the Trusts require a decision by a majority of the Trustees, the sanction of the Trustees unable to be present may be obtained in writing by post or otherwise.
- (d) The proceedings of the Trustees' Meetings shall be duly recorded in a Minute Book, and the annual Trust Account shall be kept separate from the Circuit or Society Account and shall be submitted annually to the Trustees by the officer whom they appoint to be responsible for this duty.
- (e) The Trustees on the nomination of the Superintendent Minister may appoint from time to time and remove from office, such and so many officers paid or unpaid, as they may consider requisite and expedient to assist them in the control and management of the Trust property.
- (f) The order and form of business of Trustees' Meetings will be found in Appendix 10 and shall be carefully followed at such meetings.

**11.58** The foregoing regulations shall also apply to meetings of Trustees of property not yet vested on the Statutory Trusts provided that while the Superintendent of the Circuit or a minister nominated by her/him shall preside at the Trustees' Meeting, he/she shall not be entitled to vote unless he/she is a Trustee.

**11.59** The Trustees' Meeting may appoint a suitable person to be Steward, whose duty it shall be to look after any income that the Trustees may have, and to account for the same to the Trustees at their meeting, or at the Circuit Executive, as he/she may be directed.

The income derivable on behalf of the Trusts shall be applied to:

- (a) the discharge of liabilities incurred for rent, interest on debt or other outgoings.

- (b) the maintenance of the Trust property.
- (c) the Circuit Funds.

- 11.60** A schedule of Trust property on the Circuit, showing the condition of each Trust as to debt, state of repair, insurance and other particulars compiled from the Annual Reports of the Trustees shall be submitted to the Circuit Executive in March in each year, and afterwards forwarded to the District Secretary.
- 11.61** If any structural alteration is proposed, and in every case of expenditure in which a grant from a Connexional Fund is involved, or intended to be sought, or in which a debt is likely to be incurred, the Superintendent of the Circuit, in conjunction with the Trustees, shall promptly take such steps as may be requisite in order to obtain the sanction of the Property Board.
- 11.62** Superintendents of Circuits shall see that all needed renovations and repairs of Trust property shall be brought under the consideration of the Trustees, or, if there be no acting body of Trustees, under the consideration of the Circuit Executive or of the Church Council of the particular Society with which the property is identified and shall see that there is no unnecessary delay in making the necessary renovations and repairs.
- 11.63** When a sufficient number of Trustees is not resident within such distance as to make it practicable to hold regular Trustees' Meetings, the duties of the Trustees' Meeting shall devolve upon and be discharged by the Circuit Executive; but nothing which is inconsistent with the provisions of the Trust Deed shall be done or permitted, and no new liability shall be incurred, nor any structural alterations or additions made, without the consent of the Trustees.

### **Use of Church Property**

- 11.64** Trustees shall take care that Church property is restricted to Church uses only, in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deed of the premises.

The use of our Trust property for the purposes of political meetings is not contemplated by the provisions of any of our Trust Deeds, and such property can only be lawfully used for the purposes provided for in the Trust Deed.

The greatest possible care must be taken not to allow premises set apart for religious purposes to be used for entertainments which would bring offence to our people generally.



Card playing, games of chance and amusements of a vulgar type are not allowed on our Trust premises.

- 11.65** The sale, consumption or supply of alcohol on Trust premises occupied and used by the Church is forbidden.
- 11.66** Gambling of every kind is expressly forbidden in all Methodist Church buildings: and further:
- (a) The raising of funds for Methodist Church purposes by means of raffles, gaming or by any method which involves gambling is not permitted under any circumstances.
  - (b) Raffles are not permitted in halls, schools, institutes, or other premises forming part of our Church buildings.
  - (c) Guessing and other competitions which involve the method or principle of the raffle are also excluded.
- 11.67** The attention of the Trustees is drawn to the General Rules of the Society of the [People called Methodists](#) as set out in paragraph 1.03. Trustees are empowered to permit, in premises for which they are responsible, only those activities which are not contrary to these regulations.

### **Prevention of Unauthorised Persons from Preaching in Methodist Places of Worship**

- 11.68** It is provided in the Statutory Trusts on which Methodist property is held that “The Trustees may permit such other person or persons duly approved or appointed by the Superintendent Minister according to the usage of the Church to preach in such premises....”.

In all cases where permission is given to ministers or representatives of other denominations to conduct religious services in Methodist Trust premises, ministers or persons so appointed or permitted shall not preach, maintain, propagate or teach any doctrine or practice contrary to the Statement of Belief contained in the Constitution of the Church for the time being.

The responsibility of admitting such persons as aforesaid to our premises lies with the Superintendent minister of the Circuit. Trustees have, however, in such cases, a power of veto on the Superintendent; who, nevertheless, alone has the power to initiate such an appointment.

In all cases where such permission is given, it shall, in order to be valid, be renewed in connection with every change of Superintendent.

### **Endowments Held Locally**

- 11.69** In view of the fact that a number of endowments on behalf of Circuits and institutions of the Methodist Church are held locally the Conference directs Superintendents to make known to their Circuit Executives the following regulations:
- (a) Trustees are obliged by law to invest trust money in trustee securities, unless the instrument creating the Trust specifically permits otherwise. Further, Trustees, unless authorised as above by Deed, are bound to sell non-trustee investments and re-invest in trustee securities.
  - (b) In the event of trust monies being invested in non-trustee securities or being allowed to remain in non-trustee investments the Trustees, or persons so investing them, or allowing them to remain so invested, are personally liable for any loss or depreciation that may result from such investment.
  - (c) Trustees investing in non-trustee securities by direction of the Circuit Executive or other Circuit authority are not thereby exempt from the personal liability which will attach to them in the event of such security resulting in the loss to the Trust or depreciation in the value of the Trust funds and cannot even set off the appreciation of one non-trustee investment against the depreciation of another non-trustee investment.
  - (d) The Conference has provided in the Statutory Trustees a body to which as far as possible all Trust monies should be transferred for investment, and in certain circumstances the Conference can, under the provisions of the Methodist Church in Ireland Acts, 1928, compel such transfer to be made.

### **Sunday School Teachers' Meeting**

- 11.70** The main object of Methodist Sunday Schools shall be to instruct and train the scholars in the doctrines, privileges, and duties of the Christian religion. The Holy Scriptures and, as far as possible, the Methodist Catechisms shall be used as the means of instruction and training. All the scholars shall be trained in the duty of regular attendance at public worship on the Lord's Day.

- 11.71** Every Sunday School shall be under the management of a Committee, consisting of:
- (a) The minister of the Society, who shall preside at all meetings of the Committee at which he/she may be present. In the absence of the minister, the chair shall be taken by a colleague, or, if no minister be present, by the Superintendent of the School.
  - (b) The officers of the School, who shall be:
    - (i) A Superintendent or Superintendents, who must be Church members, and who shall have been appointed by the Circuit Executive.
    - (ii) A Secretary or Secretaries, and if necessary a Treasurer, Librarian, and a Missionary Secretary.
  - (c) The teachers shall be of good moral character, and in sympathy with the doctrines and discipline of Methodism.

Sunday School teachers may be received on trial by the Superintendent of the School. After a probation of three months they may be nominated by her/him at a Teachers' Meeting and, if approved, shall be appointed by the Meeting.

- 11.72** No person shall be continued as an officer or teacher who shall at any time be declared by the Committee, or by the Church Council or Circuit Executive, to be unfitted in respect of general character or religious opinions for taking part in the religious education of the young.
- 11.73** The business of the meeting shall be to determine the programme of instruction in the school, to arrange for examinations, to inquire concerning absent scholars, and to deal with all matters affecting the welfare of the school.

### **Advisory Councils**

- 11.74** Advisory Councils, consisting of ministers and lay representatives from the Circuits, may be formed in towns in which there are two or more Circuits, to consider such subjects as the following:
- (a) united action in such evangelistic work as can best be carried out by a union of the forces of the several Circuits.
  - (b) united action in favour of temperance, religious observance of the Lord's Day, and social welfare and purity.

**11.75** Councils shall conform to the following regulations:

- (a) on all questions, the settlement of which now belongs by law to the several Circuit Courts the resolutions and recommendations of the Council shall merely advise and shall not possess a legislative or executive authority.
- (b) in harmony with the non-political character of the Methodist Church, which does not exist for the purposes of party, all party-political questions shall be strictly excluded from the consideration of the Council.

## CHAPTER 12 - LOCAL OFFICERS

### Qualification for Office

- 12.01** It is in the highest degree desirable that all persons nominated for office in the Methodist Church shall be spiritually and otherwise fitted for the positions to which they may be appointed.
- (a) No person shall be appointed to any of the following offices who is not a Church member.
  - (b) No person with an unspent criminal conviction or undischarged bankruptcy may be a member of a Church Council or Circuit Executive or hold any of the following offices.

### Appointment and Duties

#### Class Leaders

- 12.02** The duties of Class Leaders are as set forth in the General Rules of the Society. Superintendents are required to use the utmost care in regard to the persons whom they shall nominate for appointment to this important office.
- (a) Class Leaders shall be appointed to every Society.
  - (b) They shall be nominated by the Superintendent, and appointed by the Church Council
  - (c) They shall be trained for pastoral responsibility, which includes visitation of the members in the home and the regular meeting in Classes.
  - (d) As a Leader is chosen to take charge of a Class, her/his office shall be regarded as having terminated when the class is no longer in being or when he/she ceases to fulfil the particular duties assigned her/him.

#### Local Preachers

- 12.03** The appointment and duties of Local Preachers are found in [Chapter 6](#) and associated Policies.

#### Circuit Stewards

- 12.04** Regulations concerning Circuit Stewards are set out in [Chapter 11](#)
- 12.05** The duties of a Circuit Steward are set out in [11.39](#)

## Society Stewards

**12.06** Regulations concerning Society Stewards are set out in [Chapter 11](#).

**12.07** The duties of a Society Steward are set out in [11.22\(a\)](#)

## Stewards of the Benevolent Fund

**12.08** (a) There shall not be more than two for any Church.

- (b) They shall be appointed by the Church Council, or where there is not such a meeting, by the Circuit Executive, on the nomination of the Superintendent.
- (c) They shall not be appointed to the same office for more than four years in succession.

**12.09** The duties of the Benevolent Fund Stewards shall be:

- (a) To make the necessary provision for the due observance of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
- (b) To receive the collections made at the Lord's Supper.
- (c) To pay any sum that may be voted by the Church Council for the relief of distress.

## Secretary of the Church Council

**12.10** Regulations concerning Secretaries of Church Councils are set out in [Chapter 11](#).

## Circuit Secretary

**12.11** Regulations concerning Circuit Secretaries are set out in [Chapter 11](#).

## Sunday School Superintendents

**12.12** Sunday School Superintendents

- (a) shall be appointed by the Circuit Executive on the nomination of the Superintendent Minister.
- (b) shall be appointed annually, but the normal term shall not exceed ten years.

**12.13** Where no other suitable person is available to hold one of the foregoing offices, the Superintendent Minister may, after consultation with the District Superintendent, nominate, and the Church Council or Circuit Executive may appoint, for a longer period.

## Trustees of Connexional Property on the Circuit

**12.14** For regulations regarding their appointment and duties, [see Chapter 11](#). The Trustees Meeting of trusts of Churches, manses, schools or halls, and, generally, of trusts in which the power of appointment rests with the Superintendent, or with the Circuit Executive, shall have the right to have one representative at a meeting of the Circuit Executive at which matters relating to that particular trust property are on the agenda.

## Pew Stewards

**12.15** (a) There shall not be more than two Pew Stewards in connection with any Church.

(b) They shall be appointed on the nomination of the Superintendent Minister at a Trustees' Meeting, or where no such meeting is held, by the Circuit Executive.

## Time of Appointment

**12.16** The appointment of all local officials and leaders not covered by the provisions of Chapter 11 shall normally take place at the last meeting in the Calendar Year of the Church Council or Circuit Executive, as appropriate. Terms of office will normally begin on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Any vacancies occurring during the year may be filled by the Church Council or Circuit Executive, as appropriate.

## CHAPTER 13 - MINISTERS' RESIDENCES

### **Manse Provision, Maintenance and Finance**

**13.01** The Circuit Executive shall ensure that

- (a) suitable comfortable and properly furnished residences with adequate sanitary facilities are provided for the ministers appointed to that Circuit.
- (b) residences and furniture therein are kept in proper repair.
- (c) All rates and taxes relating to ministers' residences are paid.

It shall be the duty of the Superintendent of the Circuit to make an annual report to the District Superintendent in relation to their condition and repair.

**13.02** The Connexional Team shall have powers and responsibilities of a Circuit Executive in regard to the residences of the General Secretary of the Home Mission Department, and any other ministers working under the direction of the Home Mission Department. The General Purposes Fund shall hold similar powers with regard to the residence of the Secretary of the Conference. Committees of Departments, Institutions and Missions shall likewise be responsible for the provision and upkeep of residences of ministers connected with the Departments, Institutions and Missions.

**13.03** In December the Circuit Executive shall appoint a manse inspection committee to assist the Manse Steward, which shall consist of a representative group drawn from the Circuit membership. The Circuit shall provide a Furniture Book for each manse on the Circuit in which shall be entered a full and proper inventory and description of the furniture and effects in the house, with the signature of the Circuit Steward or Manse Steward to the inventory.

**13.04** The Circuit Executive shall allocate a reasonable sum of money each year for the purpose of maintaining the fabric and quality of decor of the manse. This amount shall be identified in a separate manse account and shall be included in the Circuit accounts. Expenditure on property or furniture during the year shall be recorded in the Circuit Schedule Book, Manse Furniture Book and Home Mission Department schedule. No application for Home Mission Department grants will be considered without a current schedule.

**13.05** When leaving a Circuit, a minister shall obtain the signature of the Circuit Steward or Manse Steward to the inventory and shall be held accountable for



any want of good order and condition in which the furniture may be found prior to the minister's departure from the Circuit.

**13.06** The Minister shall be responsible for:

- (a) the care of all items provided by the Circuit as listed in the Furniture Book.
- (b) the provision of general furnishings not provided by the Circuit (as required in the document "Manses — Basic Accommodation required" issued by the Home Mission Department and approved by Conference.)
- (c) damage to furniture, and all breakage or loss, arising from neglect or fault by the resident minister. Such damage, breakage or loss shall be repaired and made good by him/her at the time of the occurrence.

**13.07** The Governance Board annually, on the recommendation of the Home Mission Department, shall approve an amount for the provision of furnishing grants which shall be paid through the Comprehensive Assessment by the Circuits and disbursed by the General Purposes Fund.

**13.08** All Circuit accounts, which shall include a statement of the total assets of the Circuit, shall be audited and a statement to this effect submitted to Spring Synod.

### Standardisation of Manses

**13.09** In situations where manse accommodation is not of the required standard for the appointment of a minister, the Stationing Committee may leave the station vacant.

### Vacant Manses

**13.10** A vacant manse is defined as one where no minister appointed by the Conference is resident.

**13.11** Where a vacant manse meets the required standards, no letting shall be considered until a decision is made by the Connexional Team that it is not likely to be required for ministerial accommodation in the foreseeable future. Where a manse has been vacant for 5 years, and where legally permissible, the Home Mission Department shall have vacant possession in order to use the property in the best interests of the Connexion.

**13.12** Most manses are the property of the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland. Local Circuits are the stewards of the properties and are charged with providing and maintaining them for the use of the ministers appointed to the

Circuit. The proceeds of the sale of manses shall normally be allocated to the Home Mission Fund on the understanding that, should a manse be required at a future date on a Circuit where a manse has been sold, it will be provided with the assistance of the Home Mission Department.

**13.13** The letting of a manse requires the permission of the Property Board. The letting agreement must be drawn up by a solicitor acting on behalf of the Circuit and must be approved by the Property Board. The rental proceeds shall be lodged in the Circuit manse account, and used only for maintenance of the manse or, where agreed with the Home Mission Department, other manses on the circuit. Any surplus remaining at the end of the year shall be paid to the Home Mission Department. Manses shall be rented at a rate based on the valuation given by a local estate agent and letting arrangements must take account of the exigencies of Stationing.

Lay workers living in vacant manses shall be required to pay a commercial rent, and there shall be a formal letting agreement.

**13.14** If a manse does not meet the required specifications, it must either be:

- (a) brought up to the required standards within a time specified by the Connexional Team, in consultation with the Home Mission Department and Property Board, or
- (b) replaced, for which the approval of the Home Mission Department and Property Board is required.

### Non-Stipendiary Ministers

**13.15** Non-Stipendiary Ministers normally reside in their own home. Office space should be provided for their use, if required, by the Circuit, ideally on church premises.

### Ministers residing in their own property

**13.16** The discipline and practice of Itinerant Ministers living in the manse provided by the Circuit, Department or Institution is re-affirmed. However, ministers who are within two years of retirement from the active ministry may be permitted to live in their own residence, provided it is convenient and accessible to the members of the Circuit, Department or Institution to which the minister has been appointed. Permission must be obtained from the District Superintendent and the Home Mission Department. Any minister who

chooses to exercise this option will receive no allowances towards manse expenses. No extra travel allowance shall be paid.

- 13.17** Ministers who are not within two years of retirement and choose not to live in the manse provided are in breach of the Discipline of the Church and the matter will be referred to the President and the President's Advisory Committee.

### Manse handover

- 13.18** In the year that a minister is due to move, the Circuit Executive shall arrange for the inspection of the condition and structure of the manse by a competent group, not to exceed five people, appointed by the District Superintendent.
- 13.19** The inspection shall be carried out against a Surveyors' checklist which will be supplied by the Home Mission Department and all items considered to be unsatisfactory shall be made good before the new minister moves into the appointment. An independent report shall be sent to the District Superintendent, who will bring the report to the notice of the Property Board. It shall be the responsibility of the Circuit Executive to implement the recommendations of the report.
- 13.20** In the event that unsatisfactory items are not made good at the appropriate time, the newly appointed minister, the District Superintendent, the officers of the Home Mission Department and Circuit Officials will prepare a report for the Connexional Team and shall address the implementation of the recommendations of the report. A report confirming that unsatisfactory items have been made good and confirming the satisfactory condition of the property on hand-over shall be presented to the Connexional Team.
- 13.21** When the draft of Stations is circulated at the beginning of March, each minister expecting to move, and Superintendents and the Circuit Stewards expecting a change on their Circuit, will be given an outline of their obligations in relation to manse property by the General Secretary of the Home Mission Department.
- 13.22** Prior to the date when the new minister is due to take up residence in the manse, the manse property must be thoroughly cleaned in line with the guidelines supplied by the Home Mission Department. If the condition of the manse is considered to be unsatisfactory, the Manse Steward, with the approval of the Circuit Superintendent, (or the District Superintendent, if the Circuit Superintendent is the person occupying the manse) shall make

arrangements for the necessary work to be undertaken. If alternative accommodation is required during the period when the manse is being prepared for the new minister, it shall be provided at the expense of the Circuit. In the event that the resident minister is the District Superintendent, or a minister on a separated appointment, or the President, the matter shall be referred to the Governance Board.

### Funding/Grants

- 13.23** Where a manse is being let, the excess of income over expenditure necessary to maintain the premises shall be remitted to the Home Mission Department. Details of expenditure on such maintenance must be recorded in the Circuit accounts.
- 13.24** Furniture grants may be paid by the Home Mission Department to ministers who are unable, from their own resources, to provide personal furnishing for a manse. This is in addition to the grant paid to ministers who have moved to a new station.
- 13.25** Applications from Circuits for assistance with the funding of repairs and/or refurbishment shall be submitted on the appropriate application form, with current Circuit accounts and a copy of the previous year's audited accounts appended. Expenditure on repairs and /or re-decorating each year must be entered into the Circuit accounts, the Circuit Schedule book and the Furniture Book.

### Storage of furniture

- 13.26** The storage of manse furniture must be undertaken at the expense of the minister, in consultation with the Circuit Superintendent or Manse Committee. Manse furniture stored must be returned to the manse in good condition.

### Accommodation for Married Students in College

- 13.27** Furnished accommodation shall be provided for married students while at Edgell College. In cases where it is deemed necessary, the Governors of Edgell College may consult with the Officers of the Home Mission Department regarding the provision of such accommodation.

## CHAPTER 14 - CIRCUIT AND CONNEXIONAL FINANCE

**14.01** The Governance Board is the body delegated by Conference with the responsibility of maintaining overall management, control and oversight of the Connexional and circuit finances of the Church. The Governance Board further delegates the management of individual funds to the Connexional Funds, Boards, Teams, Departments, missions, circuits and societies concerned. All are accountable to the Governance Board and hence to Conference for the management of the funds held by them.

### **Circuit Income**

**14.02** It is a principle in Methodism that every Circuit is expected to take upon itself the responsibility of providing the funds necessary for the maintenance of its ministers, and the expenses incidental to the work within its bounds; but Circuits may receive assistance from the Home Mission Department, so long as the necessity for it is proved to exist.

**14.03** When bequests or donations made for assisting in the support of the ministry, or for other purposes in connection with Circuits, are intended to be invested, and the annual proceeds applied for the purposes mentioned, the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland are authorised to receive such bequests and donations for the proper investment thereof, and the payment of the income thereof to the duly authorised recipients.

**14.04** Except by permission of the Governance Board, Circuits shall not hold bequests or donations upon Trust unless when local Trustees have been appointed by name in the Deed creating the Trust. In each such case an entry shall be made in the Circuit Schedule Book reciting the purposes of the Trust, the securities held and the names of the Trustees. A memorandum giving this information shall also be sent to the Secretary of the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

It is highly desirable, however, that in all cases local Trustees shall exercise the powers given to them by the Methodist Church in Ireland Act (1915), to transfer such funds to the custody of the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

### **Circuit Expenditure**

**14.05** The ordinary expenditure of a Circuit includes:

- (a) the maintenance of the ministers.
- (b) the rent and taxes payable in respect of their residences, and such proportion of their lighting and heating costs as the Governance Board may from time to time determine.
- (c) the cost of repairs to the residences, and of providing and maintaining suitable furniture;
- (d) the assessment on behalf of Connexional Funds.
- (e) travelling expenses in the Circuit.
- (f) the allowances for stationery and postage.
- (g) the expenses incurred for maintaining, repairing, lighting, heating and cleaning the various churches or places of worship in the Circuit.
- (h) the adequate insurance of Connexional property.

### **Circuit and Society Accounts**

**14.06** Superintendents are required to see that their Treasurers keep accurate quarterly accounts of income and expenditure. The financial year shall be the calendar year. As soon as possible after the close of the December quarter, the annual Statement of Income and Expenditure shall be submitted in the format and according to the timetable prescribed by the Governance Board from time to time.

**14.07** Superintendents are required to see that societies keep accurate quarterly accounts of income and expenditure for all bank accounts. The financial year shall be the calendar year. Each society must submit their accounts in the format proscribed by the Governance Board by 28th February of the year following the year to which they relate to the General Secretary. These should include backup documentation as laid out from time to time to ensure the accounts can be reviewed as part of the overall accounts of the Methodist Church.

### **Bank Loans**

**14.08** Apart from the usual facilities in respect of Circuit overdrafts, no bank loans shall be negotiated by any Circuit/Society without the previous sanction of the Governance Board.

### **Ministerial Support**

**14.09** A governing principle of the financial structure of Methodism is that ministers receive support according to the requirements of themselves and their families, and not salaries according to the value which may be placed upon their services.

### **Presentation of Accounts and Budgets**

**14.10** All Connexional Funds, Departments, Institutions, Missions and Circuits which are under the jurisdiction of the Governance Board, and whose finances form part of the consolidated accounts of the Church, shall prepare annual Financial Statements as follows:

- (a) an Income and Expenditure Account for each of their Funds;
- (b) a Balance Sheet with appendices covering movement of reserves.
- (c) A budget submission detailing the expected income and expenditure for the following year. All accounts and budget submissions shall be forwarded to the Finance Department in the format and according to the timetable prescribed by the Governance Board.

**14.11** The Governance Board shall determine and direct from time to time which Accounts shall be published and in what manner. The Accounts of all Funds, Departments, Institutions, Missions and Circuits shall be available at the office of the General Secretary for inspection by request.

### **Auditors**

**14.12** The Governance Board shall appoint Auditors annually to audit the Consolidated accounts of the Methodist Church.

### **Comprehensive Assessment and the Budgeting Process**

**14.13** In order to ensure the equalisation of responsibility in maintaining Connexional Funds, a Comprehensive Assessment has been established for the support of such Funds as may be designated by the Governance Board.

**14.14** A Connexional Budget Working Group shall be appointed by the Governance Board. The Group will include representatives of all the major areas of finance within the Church and will normally be comprised of the following:

- The General Secretary (Chair and Convenor)
- The Head of Finance
- The District Superintendent of each District
- The General Secretary of the Home Mission Department
- The Chair of the Property Board
- The Operations Manager
- The Team Leader of the IMYC
- The Director of the Ministries Team (Ministries Team Leader)
- A Representative of the Statutory Trustees

Additional members may be co-opted where specific skill sets are required.

**14.15** The Connexional Budget Working Group shall:

(a) scrutinise and monitor the budgets for the next financial year and ensure that the prepared budgets are reasonable, and in accordance with the rules of the Conference and in accordance with the budget parameters laid down by the Governance Board.

(i) Budget submissions from Societies and Circuits shall be processed through the District Superintendents and the Connexional Team who shall scrutinise them in conjunction with the Society or Circuit so that initial conditional approval may be given to the Society or Circuit. These budget submissions shall then be included in the overall District budget submission.

(ii) Budget submissions from all other entities shall be compiled in consultation with the Head of Finance and the General Secretary:-

(b) following approval of the overall budget, recommend to the Audit, Risk and Budget Committee of the Governance Board the amount required for the support of the church budget, taking into consideration provisions for expenditure and other parameters already determined by the Governance Board.



- 14.16** To meet the requirements of the Comprehensive Assessment, all Circuits and such Departments and Institutions as may be directed by the Governance Board shall be assessed each year. The amounts payable by Circuits, Departments and Institutions shall be based on a formula to be determined and adjusted from time to time by the Governance Board.
- 14.17** All Circuits shall submit their accounts, in the format set down from time to time by the Governance Board, to the General Secretary not later than 28th February each year. Where this direction is not observed the Circuit income and expenditure shall be estimated and the assessment based thereon.
- 14.18** The Circuits shall be given, not later than 8th April, the relevant details of the calculations affecting their own assessment. Any appeal must be lodged before 15th April, after which no appeal shall be considered. Before 15th May each year agreement shall be reached between the General Secretary and each Circuit as to the amount of assessment to be paid.
- 14.19** Circuits shall make payments of their assessments in quarterly instalments in March, June, September and December. Assessments shall be collected and disbursed by the General Secretary. The financial year of the Comprehensive Assessment shall be from 1st January to 31st December.
- 14.20** An Appeals Panel shall be appointed by the Governance Board each year. Any Fund drawing income from the Comprehensive Assessment or any Circuit paying assessment may appeal in the event of major disagreement as to the amount to be allowed to the Fund concerned or the amount of assessment to be paid by any Circuit.
- 14.21** For the purposes of the Comprehensive Assessment all notices shall be addressed to the Superintendent of the Circuit, with a copy to the Circuit Steward.
- 14.22** In cases of stations left vacant or the re-arrangement of Circuits, or in the event of a minister resigning or being removed from a Circuit, or in the event of the death of a serving minister, the appropriate Committee shall have authority to adjust the assessments on the Circuits concerned.

### Disposal of Legacies

- 14.23** The following procedure shall be adopted in the disposal of legacies:

- (a) Details of any gifts received either inter vivos or by will by any Fund or Department which itself is in receipt of money from the Comprehensive Assessment shall be given to the General Secretary each year at the same time as the other information required.
- (b) These gifts shall be set out under two headings:
  - (i) Gifts which by the conditions imposed by the donor must of necessity be invested so that the Fund or Department has only the right to the income therefrom.
  - (ii) Gifts which have been received unconditionally.
- (c) The General Secretary shall be informed by the officers of the Fund or Department as to whether they intend to treat such unconditional gifts, or any portion thereof, as an addition to capital or as income.
- (d) The General Secretary shall have the right to disagree with such a decision and to make her/his own recommendations. In such a case the recommendation, together with the reasons for it must be sent to the officers of the Fund or Department concerned within fourteen days.
- (e) The Fund or Department shall have the right to appeal against such a recommendation to the Appeals Panel, and the same procedure will apply as for other appeals to the Panel.
- (f) The officers of the Funds or Departments mentioned in paragraph (a) above shall keep a record of any gifts received unconditionally which have been treated as capital, so that the availability of these monies will not be overlooked if at any future date it appears to be in the interest of the Fund or Department or of the whole Church that part or all of these monies be used as income.
- (g) The officers of Funds or Departments not in receipt of money from the Comprehensive Assessment shall keep a record similar to that mentioned in paragraph (f) above.

### **Audit Risk and Budget Committee**

- 14.24** (a) The Governance Board will appoint annually an Audit, Risk and Budget Committee which will report to it. Membership of the Committee will be taken from the Governance Board, with additional members co-opted as required.

- (b) The quorum for meetings shall be four members including the Chair. The Chair of the Governance Board shall not be eligible for appointment as Chair of the Committee but may be in attendance as and when required.
  - (c) Any appointment to the Committee shall be a period of three years, but individuals may be re-appointed for additional periods of up to three years at a time. However, the Conference may terminate an appointment at any time. The Committee may appoint its own Secretary
  - (d) The Head of Finance of the Methodist Church in Ireland will normally attend the meetings of the Committee. Other Connexional Treasurers shall attend if requested by the Committee.
- 14.25** The Committee will meet at least three times per year. A meeting may be called by any member of the Committee or by the General Secretary.
- 14.26** The Committee will draw on best practices which apply in the public and in the private sectors as are relevant to the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- 14.27** The Committee is an advisory body with no executive powers. However, it is authorised by the Governance Board to investigate any activity within its terms of reference, and to seek any information it requires from ministers and/or lay staff, who are required to cooperate with the Committee in the conduct of its enquiries. Committee requests for work, and reports received by the Committee from internal audit will be channelled through the General Secretary.
- 14.28** The Committee is authorised, subject to consultation with the General Secretary, to obtain independent professional advice and to secure the attendance of persons with relevant experience and expertise, as it considers such to be necessary.

## Specific duties of the Audit Risk and Budget Committee

- 14.29** The specific duties of the Committee shall be:

- (a) To examine the annual consolidated Connexional accounts and recommend them for approval or otherwise to the Governance Board. The annual consolidated Connexional Accounts shall be signed by the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland and the General Secretary
- (b) To discuss with the External Auditors the nature and scope of each forthcoming audit and to ensure that they have the full cooperation of staff
- (c) To consider the adequacy of the processes used to prepare relevant reports, including Strategic Plans; Risk registers; Budgets; Management accounts; the Annual accounts; and any other reports including responses by Management, issued by the Auditors, and to consider the implications of such reports with respect to governance and risk monitoring and to make recommendations to the Governance Board.
- (d) To review the effectiveness of the Internal Control system and Risk management processes to ensure that the aims, financial results and key performance targets are achieved in the most accurate, efficient and timely manner possible across the Connexion
- (e) To ensure, in the absence of an internal audit function, that a scoping exercise is coordinated with the External Auditors – or a similar Accountancy entity – at least annually, with the areas to be examined having been previously agreed with the Committee. Such exercise is to be additional to the external annual audit conducted by the External Auditors
- (f) To review where appropriate the adequacy of the tendering process for items of expenditure (either specifically or grouped as part of a series of similar transactions) in excess of £50,000 (or other such sum as may from time to time be deemed appropriate) and to make recommendations for improvement as the Committee see fit
- (g) To meet with external auditors at least once a year without staff being present
- (h) To review and advise the Governance Board on best practice in relation to Corporate Governance
- (i) To consider and advise the Conference as to the adequacy and scoping requirements of the Committee
- (j) To review annually the Connexional treasurers' policies and procedures manuals and make recommendations for improvements/additions in line with best practice

- (k) To consider the adequacy of the Church's procedures and policies on capital expenditure, alteration of buildings, centralisation and custody over title deeds and investments, adequacy of insurance arrangements, cash handling and banking procedures and investment benchmarking and custody arrangements
- (l) To consider in conjunction with the relevant officers of the Connexion and the external auditors the appropriateness of the key accounting policies; the impact of any changes to accounting policies; the basis for arriving at any significant estimate judgements applied in the financial statements, to give consideration to the appropriateness of the going concern concept conclusions and the key overall financial and operational risks to which the organisation is exposed
- (m) To consider the completeness and accuracy of all financial returns prepared by Societies, Circuits, Missions and Connexional Funds personnel in conjunction with management and the training arrangements operated by management to train treasurers to prepare accurate and complete pro forma returns
- (n) To consider the adequacy of the guidelines in place for the calculation of the Comprehensive Assessment.
- (o) To ensure there is an adequate whistle blowing policy for clergy, lay staff and volunteers in place
- (p) To consider any other matters when requested to do so by the Governance Board.
- (q) To make a statement in the Annual report about its activities, membership of the Committee and number of meetings over the course of the year
- (r) To report annually to the Conference on the discharge of its duties
- (s) To maintain and regularly review a comprehensive Risk Register for the Church which will include steps to mitigate risk
- (t) To review the annual Church budget produced by the Connexional Budget Working Group and, where satisfied, forward it to the Governance Board for final approval
- (u) To review actual versus budgeted outcomes and report to the Governance Board
- (v) To work with the Head of Finance and any committee appointed by the Governance Board to:

(i) To consider the adequacy of the policies and procedures in place to determine the pay, stipends, benefits and conditions of all ministers, probationers and minister's widows or widowers, (including Honoria if applicable), and to recommend to the Governance Board any changes to be applied.

(ii) To prepare and publish a comprehensive statement on the scale of stipends and allowances applicable at any time and the conditions that apply to them.

#### **14.30 Legal entities within the Circuit**

- (a) From time to time, a Circuit may need to set up a separate legal entity outside the structure of the Circuit or Society in order to access funding for a project or for other reasons. As soon as the Circuit Executive has agreed that such an approach is necessary, the Superintendent must contact the General Secretary for guidance. The General Secretary will bring this for consideration by the Audit Committee and subsequent approval by the Governance Board.
- (b) All such legal entities have fiduciary duties dictated by the law of the land. The individual trustees of these legal entities must keep aware of these duties and comply with them.
- (c) A copy of any reports filed with Companies House and The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, or The Companies Registration Office and The Charities Regulatory Authority for the Republic of Ireland shall be forwarded immediately to the General Secretary.
- (d) The most recent annual financial statements of each such legal entity shall be sent to the General Secretary at the same time as Circuit and Society accounts. A copy of the most recent financial statements in the format required by The Charity Commission will suffice for this purpose.

A register of all separate legal entities will be maintained by the General Secretary.

## CHAPTER 15 - HOME MISSION TEAM

**15.01** The Home Mission Team works alongside the District Superintendents, Committees/Boards of the Church and other Connexional Departments and Teams to support Districts, Circuits and local congregations to participate in the mission of God.

The purpose of the Team is:

- To resource and challenge the Connexion as it implements mission strategy
- To resource and encourage the Connexion in prayer.

**15.02** The Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland are authorised by Statute (Methodist Church in Ireland Act, 1915) to hold real, leasehold, or personal estate, devised or bequeathed, or legally assured to them upon or for any trusts connected with the Home Mission work of the Methodist Church in Ireland, and by direction of the Conference all such Trust moneys or estates are held by the Statutory Trustees.

**15.03** Each year, the Home Mission Team shall ensure that arrangements are made for Home Mission services or meetings to be led by a team of ordained and lay people in every Circuit. The aims are to share information about the work of God throughout Ireland and to encourage financial support for the work of the Team.

### Administration

**15.04** The Home Mission Team works under the delegated authority of the Governance Board through the Connexional Team, to which it is accountable through the Secretary of Conference. Its structure shall be as follows:

1. The Connexional Officers who shall be appointed by the Governance Board:
  - The General Secretary of the Home Mission Team
  - The Chair of the Connexional Home Mission Advisory Group, who shall be a minister.
2. The staff team
3. The Connexional Home Mission Advisory Group.

**15.05** The General Secretary of the Home Mission Team shall be appointed annually by the Governance Board and act as Team Leader, to whom all communications on Team business shall be addressed. The staff team, as approved by the Governance Board, may be engaged to assist the Team Leader, and all salaries and expenses shall be a charge on the Team.

The Constitution of the Advisory Group shall be:

- The Chairperson, appointed annually by the Governance Board.
- The General Secretary of the Home Mission Team.
- Other co-opted members with specific experience and skills.

The Advisory Group shall:

- meet at least twice a year.
- learn from missional practitioners in order to share this learning with the Connexion and help shape the work of the Home Mission Team.
- provide pastoral care to the staff team through the Chairperson.
- meet with the General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland annually.
- report to the Connexional Team through the General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- keep the Governance Board apprised of its activities.

**15.06** The Finance Team shall administer an account in a Bank in both jurisdictions in the name of "The Methodist Home Mission Fund" under the direction of the Team Leader. All collections, contributions, grants, and legacies remitted to the Team for account of the Funds shall be lodged by the Finance Team to the credit of these accounts, and payments shall be made from the Funds in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Governance Board.

**15.07** Grants which are made from the Fund, whether for ordinary or for other expenditure, shall be grants to Circuits, and not to individual ministers or other workers, except in the case of approved individual expenses. The Grants shall be sent when due, to the Superintendent minister, or other person nominated by the Superintendent, who shall account for them to the Circuit Executive. Grants shall normally be paid quarterly by the Finance Team. In cases of vacancies in Stations and re-arrangements of Circuits the Connexional Team shall have authority to adjust the grants to the Circuits concerned. Other



grants shall be paid when the conditions of the grants are fulfilled or as the Governance Board shall direct.

**15.08** The Governance Board is directed to frame its recommendations so as to bring the proposed expenditure of the Team within the estimated income.

### Ordinary Expenditure

**15.09** District Superintendents shall inquire into the needs of those Circuits applying for grants from the Team and shall recommend to the Team the amount considered needful in each case for the ensuing calendar year. Such applications shall then be co-ordinated by the Team and brought to the Connexional Team for examination and approval.

**15.10** Applications for grants shall be made on the prescribed form and shall be accompanied by a complete set of Circuit accounts, including those of the Society in respect of which the grant is being sought, audited according to the directions of the Governance Board.

**15.11** Grants towards Ordinary expenditure are considered to be grants towards the whole of the Circuit's expenditure, as set out on the Application Form, and not as grants towards the cost of property. Circuit Accounts, (including project budgets and Investment Accounts) as requested by the Department, shall accompany all applications for grants from the Department.

**15.12** When required by the Team, a report on the life and work of the local Church and/or Circuit, the mission, needs and opportunities of the Circuit receiving the grant, shall be furnished by the District Superintendent in consultation with the Superintendent of the Circuit.

### Other Expenditure

**15.13** Subject to such conditions as may be directed by the Governance Board, and in each case on the approval of the Board, (or the Connexional Team), the Team may provide grants or loans towards the cost of:

- (a) the purchase of manses
- (b) furnishing of manses
- (c) repair of, or structural alterations to, manses
- (d) serious need in ministers' families, in conjunction with the Ministers' Medical Fund, which shall administer such grants.

- (e) supplies rendered necessary by the death, illness or unavoidable absence of ministers.
- (f) the needs of ministers in special circumstances as in [Paragraph 13.24](#)

**15.14** Grants within the limit set by the Governance Board may be approved by the Home Mission Team in consultation with the Connexional Team.

### Ministers' residences

(see also [Chapter 13](#))

**15.15** Application for permission to purchase, or build, to repair or structurally alter any minister's residence shall be made through the District Superintendent to the Property Board. Grants for such expenditure shall normally be payable by the Home Mission Team.

**15.16** In processing applications for manse grants for circuits, or in assessing the adequacy of a manse, the Team may request that the District Superintendent or other person deputed by him/her, and the Manse Steward of another Circuit, make a report to the Team.

**15.17** Grants for repairs of manses shall not be made, unless previous to the expenditure being incurred, the sanction of the Home Mission Team (and in the case of structural change the Property Board) has been obtained.

**15.18** Application for permission to appoint new Trustees of any Trust property shall be made through the Property Board, the Home Mission Team or the General Education Department, according as the property concerned consists of churches, manses or schools. If any grant be made towards the cost of the Deed of Appointment, it shall be borne by the Property Board, Home Mission Team, or Education Fund as may be decided by the Governance Board.

### **Revision of Circuits and Appointment of Additional Ministers**

**15.19** In every case in which a realignment of a Circuit is proposed, details of the number of members and the mission rationale shall be furnished to the District Superintendent for consideration by the Connexional Team.

**15.20** In any case of alteration or division of Circuits the opinions of any Circuit Executive shall receive careful consideration, but the final decision shall be made by the Governance Board, on the recommendation of the Connexional Team.

**15.21** When any changes have been made in the boundaries of a Circuit by the transfer of members and preaching places to another Circuit, the Superintendent of the Circuit from which such transfer has been made shall furnish a list of such members and preaching places to the Superintendent to whose care these have been transferred, with such information as may assist in securing their sympathetic association with their new Circuit.

### **Removal Expenses of Ministers**

**15.22** All removal expenses shall be paid by the General Purposes Fund to all ministers changing Circuits on conditions determined by the Governance Board.

### **Circuit Supplies**

**15.23** The Governance Board shall determine from time to time, the scale of payment to be adopted in providing for supplies rendered necessary by the illness, or death, or suspension of ministers, having regard to the respective requirements of the Circuits concerned and the rates of statutory assistance available.

**15.24** The Governance Board shall have all the powers necessary to deal with such problems of the work and finance of Circuits as may require immediate attention during the year.

### **Home Mission Finance**

**15.25** Immediately on their receipt, all collections and subscriptions for the Funds of Home Mission shall be forwarded by the Circuit Treasurer to the Team. The Circuit accounts for Home Mission shall be closed on a date determined by the Governance Board. The Schedule shall be forwarded to the Department as soon as possible.

**15.26** All applications for Extraordinary grants must be forwarded to the District Superintendent who will recommend to the Team the amount considered needful in each case and then approval will be sought from the Connexional Team.

### **Student Chaplaincy**

**15.27** University Chaplaincy shall be supported by necessary grants approved by the Governance Board and paid by the Home Mission Team.

## The Belfast University Chaplaincy Committee

- 15.28** The Church of Ireland and Methodist Chaplaincy Belfast is a charitable limited company, registered with both Companies House NI (June 2021) and the Charities Commission NI (Jan 2022).
- 15.29** The charitable company seeks to advance the Christian faith amongst third level education University and College campuses in Belfast in accordance with the principles and practices of the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- 15.30** The charity is established to take over the responsibilities of the Belfast University Chaplaincy Committee (and all such committees and structures as designated by the Church of Ireland). As such the charity is eligible to apply for any necessary Home Mission grants to fund its work.
- 15.31** The two denominations are the Member Organisations, with each denomination having absolute discretion to appoint three Authorised Representatives to attend the Annual General Meeting on behalf of the Member Organisation. Ordinarily this will be the Secretary of Conference, the North Eastern District Superintendent, and the Superintendent of the adjacent Circuit. If one of these cannot attend the Secretary of Conference may approve a suitable alternative.
- 15.32** A Board of Directors / Charity Trustees is comprised as follows:
- a) Up to 3 Charity Trustees appointed by the Methodist Church
  - b) up to 3 Charity Trustees appointed by the Church of Ireland
  - c) The denominational chaplains appointed by the denominations in Belfast (ordinarily the chaplains at Queen's University & Stranmillis College, and Ulster University)
  - d) Up to 6 Charity Trustees who are worshipping members attending a chaplaincy community
  - e) Up to 2 external Charity Trustees (appointed by virtue of experience, skill or expertise)
- The total number of Charity Trustees of (d) and (e) shall not exceed a total number that is more than one less than the total number of trustees of (a), (b) and (c)

**15.33** Persons appointed for work amongst students shall be nominated each year by the Conference to the various institutions.

**15.34** The Board of Trustees shall meet regularly with a General Meeting at least once a year with subsequent report to the Connexional Team.

### **Mission Ireland**

**15.35** Mission Ireland is the name given to the work of the Team associated with initiating, encouraging and supporting new and existing special mission ventures in Ireland. Its activities shall be funded from the annual contributions from the Circuits and such other monies as the Team is able to allocate from its own resources.

**15.36** Application for Mission Ireland grants shall be processed by the District Superintendents who shall carefully examine such applications for assistance and shall recommend to the Team the amount considered needful in each case for the ensuing calendar year. Such applications shall be co-ordinated by the Team and brought to the Connexional Team for examination and approval. Projects employing lay workers shall only be considered if operating under under legislation of the Employment Advisory Group.

**15.37** Church Councils and Circuit Executives shall initiate and monitor suggestions for Mission Ireland ventures at Circuit and District level and shall approve applications for support. Applications for support for Mission Ireland projects shall be made on the appropriate form. All Mission Ireland causes shall be guided and controlled by a Circuit Executive with the exception of such causes as are under the direction of Departments of the Church.

## CHAPTER 16 - WORLD MISSION PARTNERSHIP

- 16.01** Every member of the Church is called to share in the whole Church's mission to offer Christ to every person. The organisation within the Methodist Church in Ireland for promoting mission around the world shall be known as World Mission Partnership. Every member of the Methodist Church belongs to this World Mission Partnership, which is none other than the Methodist Church itself sharing in world mission.
- 16.02** The aim of World Mission Partnership is to facilitate partnership with every Irish Methodist, with the Methodist Church in Britain, with Churches and organisations around the world, and with other parts of Irish Methodism also involved in mission.
- 16.03** The Methodist Church in Ireland conducts its work around the world primarily through partnership with the Methodist Church in Britain.
- (a) World Mission Partnership shall work together with the World Church Relationships Team of the Methodist Church in Britain to facilitate this.
  - (b) To further facilitate this partnership, the Governance Board, advised by the connexional Team shall:
    - (i) annually appoint representatives to relevant committees of the Methodist Church in Britain;
    - (ii) place designated and approved funds at the disposal of the World Mission Fund of the Methodist Church in Britain;
    - (iii) offer, on behalf of the Methodist Church in Ireland, men and women who present themselves for service as Mission Partners;
    - (iv) authorise its members and ministers to serve as staff or committee members within the structures of the Methodist Church in Britain, if requested by that Church.
- 16.04** The Governance Board at the behest of the Connexional Team controls how its support for the World Mission Fund and the World Church Relationships Team is organised.
- (a) World Mission Partnership shall liaise fully with the Methodist Church in Britain regarding the recruitment, training, and terms of service of Mission Partners, and all other relevant matters.

- (b) The General Secretary of World Mission Partnership, together with the Team Leader of the World Church Relationships Team, shall make arrangements for those being offered for service as Mission Partners to be recommended for such service by the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- (c) The Irish Conference shall have the final authority in all matters of discipline affecting the ministerial or membership status of an Irish Methodist Mission Partner.

### **Connexional Structures**

**16.05** The Governance Board, on the advice of the Connexional Team shall appoint annually the following officers of World Mission Partnership:

- (a) a General Secretary, who shall be an ordained minister;
- (b) two Treasurers, one ministerial and one lay, who shall receive all monies collected, subscribed or bequeathed to the Methodist Church in Ireland for world mission, present an annual financial statement to the Governance Board, and operate bank accounts in the name of “World Mission Partnership”.

**16.06** The Governance Board, on the advice of the Connexional Team shall appoint annually a World Mission Partnership Committee, consisting of the World Mission Partnership officers, the World Mission Secretary of Methodist Women in Ireland, a representative appointed by the World Development and Relief Committee together with one additional minister and four additional laypersons, of whom at least two shall be women. World Mission Partnership staff shall also attend, as required.

**16.07** The responsibilities of the World Mission Partnership Committee shall be:

- (a) to develop strategic vision;
- (b) to provide support and resources to underpin the work of mission around the world;
- (c) to make operational decisions, in consultation with other Connexional committees, under the guidance of the Connexional Team;
- (d) to organise each year Connexional events which communicate the work of World Mission Partnership and promote world mission;
- (e) to organise the production of annual world mission service material;

(f) to equip and enable World Mission Partnership Secretaries to communicate the work of World Mission Partnership and promote world mission.

**16.08** Each District Superintendent, after consulting with the District Advisory Committee, may appoint a World Mission Partnership Committee, together with Ministerial and Lay World Mission Partnership Secretaries.

**16.09** Each Circuit shall appoint a World Mission Partnership Secretary, who will be responsible for promoting world mission on the Circuit. Where possible, each Society should also appoint a World Mission Partnership Secretary.

**16.10** World Mission Partnership is the legal successor to Methodist Missionary Society (Ireland).

### **Junior Mission for All**

**16.11** Every Society is encouraged to engage with Junior Mission for All (JMA) as a means of encouraging children and young people to learn about the world and become involved in the Church's mission in every part of it.

(a) Each District Superintendent may appoint a JMA Secretary, who shall, with the assistance of local JMA secretaries, be responsible for promoting JMA and its work among children and young people in the churches of the District.

(b) Money raised for mission work by JMA shall be received by World Mission Partnership.

### **Missionary Intercession and Information**

**16.12** District, Circuit, and Society World Mission Partnership Secretaries shall, together with ministers:

(a) stress the importance of intercession for mission partners and churches around the world;

(b) encourage the widest possible circulation of prayer handbooks;

(c) stress the importance of the wide circulation of world mission literature and the full use of multi-media material;

(d) encourage the observation of the last Sunday in November as a Day of Missionary Intercession.



## CHAPTER 17 - METHODIST WOMEN IN IRELAND

**17.01** Methodist Women in Ireland is the organizing body for those women's groups within the Church who wish to affiliate and who are in agreement with its Aim and Mission Statement. The organisation is part of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (henceforth referred to as World Federation) and thus adopts the Mission Statement: 'To know Christ and to make Him known'.

### Aims

**17.02** The aims of the organisation shall be:

- (a) to enable members through fellowship with each other to deepen their personal commitment to Jesus Christ.
- (b) to relate the teaching of Jesus Christ to life in the Home, the Church, the Community and the World.
- (c) to share in the Mission of the World Church.
- (d) to provide a link with the women of other Churches in Ireland and throughout the world.

### Constitution

**17.03** The constitution of Methodist Women in Ireland is as follows:

- (a) The General Executive is the decision-making body of the organisation, and its membership is:
  - All-Ireland President
  - President Designate or Past President
  - General Secretary
  - Secretary Designate or Past Secretary (only in the year when this role is occupied)
  - General Treasurer
  - Treasurer Designate or Past Treasurer (only in the year when this role is occupied)
  - World Mission Secretary
  - World Federation Area Officer (either the President or Vice-President)

- Helen Kim Memorial Scholar
  - Three District Vice-Presidents
- (b) The General Executive is the decision-making body of the organisation and its membership is:
- The General Officers
  - The MWI District Presidents or their substitutes
  - The Past General Secretary
  - The Past General Treasurer
- (c) The Central Forum facilitates the sharing decisions made and information from the General executive, the Districts and the Committees and Bodies on which the MWI has representation. It shall consist of:
- The members of the General Executive
  - Three District Secretaries
  - Three District Treasurers
  - Three District Mission Secretaries and/or Three District World
  - Federation Representatives
  - World Federation Unit Correspondent
  - Media Secretary
  - MWI representatives to Committees within the Methodist Church in Ireland
  - MWI Representatives to Committees/Bodies outside the Methodist Church in Ireland

**17.04** Methodist Women in Ireland shall have representation on the World Mission Partnership and Mission Ireland Committees, and the Conference.

**17.05** Each MWI District shall appoint a Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer and have a District Executive composed of these three officers together with the District Mission Secretary and/or District World Federation Representative and at least one representative from each Branch on the District and any member of the General Executive residing in the District.

**17.06** At Circuit/Society level each group shall appoint a representative to the MWI District Executive. Each group may develop its own structure as appropriate to its needs.

**17.07** The financial basis and regulations shall be approved and sanctioned by the Governance Board.

**17.08** In order that the wider connexion is fully informed on their work the MWI shall make an annual report to the Connexional Team on their achievements and activities.

## CHAPTER 18 - WORLD DEVELOPMENT AND RELIEF

**18.01** The Governance Board on the advice of the Connexional Team shall annually appoint a Committee on World Development and Relief, to support the Church in learning about, understanding and responding effectively to world poverty and injustice for the transformation of the world.

**18.02** The Membership of the Committee shall be as follows:

- The Office Bearers
- The General Secretary of World Mission Partnership
- Eight members appointed by the Governance Board.
- Non-voting advisors who are invited by the Committee to attend.
- Two Lay Secretaries, one from Northern Ireland and one from the Republic of Ireland, shall be appointed by the Committee from among its own members.

**18.03** The Committee shall administer a fund for World Development and Relief. It shall receive such a percentage of the annual Connexional Comprehensive Assessment as may from time to time be determined by the Governance Board.

It shall work in consultation with World Mission Partnership and shall report to the Governance Board each year on its allocations of all sums received.

## CHAPTER 19 - THE YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S TEAM OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND (IMYC)

**19.01** The Youth and Children's Team of the Methodist Church in Ireland is responsible for the development and co-ordination of work among young people, children, young adults and families. The Team shall serve young people of every age group through a comprehensive and unified programme, seeking the wellbeing of the whole young person, personal commitment to Jesus Christ, active involvement in the Christian community and practical action in the world. IMYC shall encourage, resource and develop in partnership with other Departments and Teams and, where appropriate, other churches or agencies:

- (a) Discipleship through youth groups, children's groups, small groups, mentoring, Sunday Schools and in intergenerational church.
- (b) Mission through youth and children's work and work with families within the local church and community.
- (c) The training and development of young people and young adults for leadership and mission in and through the Church and community.
- (d) The training and development of leaders for work with young people, children, young adults and families.
- (e) New and adventurous forms of evangelical, educational, cultural, social, recreational, cross community and international activity for young people, ~~and~~ children, young adults and their families.
- (f) The nurture and care of every child, young person and young adult within the community of God's people.

**19.02** The Irish Methodist Youth and Children's Team works under the delegated authority of the Governance Board through the Connexional Team to which it is accountable through the Secretary of Conference and shall be structured as follows:

- (a) The Connexional Officers, who shall be appointed by the Governance Board:

- The General Secretary of the Youth and Children’s Team
- Chair of the Connexional Youth and Children’s Advisory Group, who shall be a minister
- A Treasurer

(b) The staff team

(c) Connexional Youth and Children’s Advisory Group

(d) District Youth and Children’s Work

(e) The Circuit or Society Youth and Children’s Work

### **Connexional Youth and Children’s Advisory Group**

**19.03** (a) The Constitution of the Advisory Group shall be:

- The Chairperson
- The General Secretary of the Youth and Children’s Team, appointed by the Governance Board
- The Treasurer
- The Connexional Officers of the Methodist Child Care Society
- Other co-opted members with specific experience and skills: two Laypersons and two Ministers.
- Up to two more co-opted members as may be required.

(b) The Advisory Group shall:

(i) Meet at least four times a year.

(ii) Consider the needs and interests of young people, children, young adults and their families and seek to advise, interpret and facilitate the carrying out of the stated Policy and Aims of the Church at all levels.

(iii) Provide pastoral care of the staff team through the Chairperson.

(iv) Meet with the General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland annually.

(v) Report to the Connexional Team through the General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland. The Advisory Group shall also keep the Governance Board apprised of its activities.

### District Youth and Children's Work

**19.04** The District Superintendent in consultation with the Team may appoint a group to facilitate youth and children's work on the District.

### Circuit/Society Youth and Children's Work

**19.05** Each Church Council is responsible for Youth and Children's work and shall make appropriate arrangements for this.

## CHAPTER 20 - BOARD OF EDUCATION

**20.01** The Board of Education is appointed annually by the Governance Board to have the direction and statement of the education policy of the Church and the oversight of matters affecting the education of young people in schools, colleges and universities. The Board shall make an annual report to the Governance Board on its activities.

The Board is responsible for the interests of the Methodist Church in all matters concerning the educational welfare of the young people connected with the Methodist Church. It shall be involved in consultations with other Churches in arranging religious education courses for Methodist (and other) pupils and for the visitation of the schools where they are being educated. It shall also seek, preferably in consultation with other Churches, to arrange for meetings of teachers engaged in religious education.

While the main duty of the Board shall relate to religious education in schools, it shall give consideration to the promotion of religion in the homes of our people, and shall consider, in co-operation with other departments of our Church, the best method of securing the observance of family devotions and the daily reading of the Scriptures in the homes of our people.

**20.02** All matters relating to school property and to the administration of the General Education Fund and matters in which the rights of the Methodist Church are involved, shall be the responsibility of the Board.

**20.03** The Board shall be constituted as follows:

- The President of the Conference
- The Lay Leader of the Conference
- The Secretary of the Conference
- The President-Designate of the Conference
- The Officers of the Board of Education
- The General Secretary of the Methodist Youth and Children's Department
- Four ministers and six lay persons to be elected by the Conference
- The Board may co-opt up to three other members.

**20.04** The Board shall appoint Executive Committees for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, to deal with the special matters relating to their respective areas and to report to the Board from time to time, and at least annually.



The respective Executive Committees shall be composed of the members of the Board resident in the area concerned, with the addition of the District Secretaries from that area, and not more than six additional members co-opted by the Executive Committee concerned. Co-opted Executive membership shall not confer membership of the main Board.

The Secretary of the Board shall be the Secretary of the Executive serving the area in which he/she is resident. The Ministerial Treasurer, if resident in the other area, shall act as Secretary for its Executive. Otherwise, the Board shall appoint a person to act as Secretary for that Executive Committee.

- 20.05** The Board shall nominate representatives of the Methodist Church on the Boards of Managements of Schools, Area Education and Library Boards, Stranmillis University College, Belfast, and all other bodies where such representation is requested and approved by the Board.

### **District Education Secretaries**

- 20.06** Each District Superintendent may, after consulting with the District Advisory Committee, appoint an Education Secretary, whose duty it shall be to arrange for the visitation of the schools.
- 20.07** Arrangements shall be made, where possible, by the District Education Secretary for pastoral oversight and religious education in schools attended by Methodist children.

The District Education Secretary shall make inquiry concerning the observance of the regulations relating to pastoral visitation and religious education in all day schools.

### **General Education Fund**

- 20.08** The Board shall administer the General Education Fund in accordance with the policies and procedures determined by the Governance Board. Two Treasurers, a minister and a lay person, and a Secretary shall be appointed annually by the Governance Board. The Treasurers shall keep the account of the Fund in a bank in the name of the "Methodist General Education Fund."
- 20.09** In every case in which the officers of the General Education Fund are involved in any financial responsibility because of their office, they shall be indemnified from and against personal loss. Any necessary payment in this connection shall be a charge on the Fund.

- 20.10** Resources available to the Board of Education shall be used to support schools at primary and secondary level, and other educational purposes in which the Church has a participatory interest. Financial support may be given to Methodist parents who choose to send their children to be educated at post primary schools where charges are payable. All applications for financial assistance shall be supported by adequate information, and the officers shall assess the need and level of support to be given.
- 20.11** The Board shall have the power to withdraw its aid from any school in which its directions have not been observed.

### **Schools under Methodist Management**

- 20.12** The Superintendent of the Circuit in which such a school is situated is appointed the manager of this school, except in such cases where other arrangements may be necessary.
- 20.13** The schools shall be systematically visited by the ministers of the Circuit wherein such schools are situated. Inquiry shall be made by the District Education Secretary concerning the observance of these regulations regarding religious education.
- 20.14** A manager shall not appoint or dismiss a Principal or assistant teacher in any school without first consulting the Board through the officers of the General Education Fund. If any dispute may arise between managers and teachers, the Governance Board shall be a court of appeal.

### **Insurance of Teachers and Pupils**

- 20.15** The managers of the schools under Methodist management shall arrange for the insurance of the teachers and pupils in these schools against the liabilities imposed by the relevant Acts of Parliament.

With regard to other schools on Methodist Trust property, Superintendents are directed to enquire in each case whether the responsibility for the insurance rests upon the Circuit, and whether it is being met.

### **Ulster Royal Schools**

- 20.16** Under the scheme of management of Royal Schools in Counties Armagh, Fermanagh, and Tyrone, a representative of the Methodist Church on the Governing Body of each school is annually appointed by the Conference.

## CHAPTER 21 - WESLEY COLLEGE DUBLIN

- 21.01** In the year 1845 the Conference approved of a proposal for the establishment of a Preparatory Grammar School, which was opened in that year as "The Wesleyan Connexional School" and was situated at Nos. 78 and 79 St. Stephen's Green South, Dublin. In 1879 the School was removed to premises on a nearby site and designated "Wesley College."
- 21.02** In the year 1911 co-education was introduced. Because of the rapid development and expansion of the city of Dublin, the College was removed in the year 1969 to a fifty-acre site at Dundrum in the southern suburbs of the city on which had been erected a campus-style school for 650 pupils, with five separate buildings, including assembly, catering and management, classrooms, science, gymnasium and separate residences for boys and girls. A substantial conditional grant was received from the Department of Education in respect of the school buildings only. All the premises are vested in the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- 21.03** A new Constitution for Wesley College, which is printed in full in the Conference Agenda 1972, was presented to and approved by the Conference of that year. Under this Constitution the Governors, the Principal, the Chaplain and the Treasurer are appointed by the Conference, with certain powers of appointment, including that of the Principal, being delegated if necessary to the General Committee. The Constitution further deals with such matters as the varying of the Constitution, the purposes and powers of the Governors of the College, Conference Visitors, religious education, together with financial and administrative matters. The Constitution ensures that Wesley College continues under the control of the Conference; it also provides that the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland is an ex- officio member of the Board of Governors of the College.
- 21.04** In 2000 the Conference amended the Constitution of the College to enable a Board of Management to be established as required by the 1998 Education Act, Section 14. A Board of Management was appointed by the Conference in 2002. In accordance with the same act the Methodist Church in Ireland was designated as 'Patron' of the College.

## CHAPTER 22 - METHODIST COLLEGE BELFAST

### Origin and Design

**22.01** This College was originally intended to meet the increased necessity for higher education felt by the Methodists of Ireland, and for the training of theological students. It was erected and endowed by means of contributions received mainly from Methodists in Ireland, England, and America, amounting in the aggregate to nearly £60,000. It was opened for the reception of students and pupils on the 19th day of August 1868.

After a period of twenty years the College was placed under the management of Governors, who by the Scheme of the Commissioners of Educational Endowments (Ireland) No. 16, 18th May, 1888, were constituted a Body Corporate by the name of "The Governors of the Methodist College, Belfast," with perpetual succession and a common seal.

### Acts of Parliament

**22.02** The Methodist College Act (Northern Ireland) 1928, separated and transferred the theological endowments of the Methodist College, Belfast, and incorporated the Governing Bodies of the Methodist College, Belfast and of the Edgehill Theological College, Belfast. It also provided for the management and administration of the said respective Colleges and the endowments thereof respectively and for other purposes.

The provisions of this Act have now to be read in conjunction with those clauses of the public legislation which affect voluntary grammar schools, i.e., the Education Acts (Northern Ireland) of 1947 and 1968 and subsequent Statutory Rules and Orders.

### Governing Body

**22.03** The Education Act (Northern Ireland) 1968 provided that the total number of Governors of the College shall not exceed twenty-seven. Under the provisions of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order of 1984, fifteen shall be appointed by the Conference (including ex-officio members), six shall be appointed by the Minister of Education, Northern Ireland, three shall be elected by parents of children attending the school from amongst the parents of such children

and three shall be elected by assistant teachers at the school from amongst such assistant teachers. The Conference appointments shall consist of:

- (a) Three ex-officio Governors:  
The President of the Conference,  
The Secretary of the Conference,  
The Ministerial Treasurer of the Children's Fund, together with:
- (b) Twelve additional members (of whom six shall be ministers and six laypersons), who shall hold office for three years.

**22.04** The twelve elected Governors shall be elected by the Conference. At every yearly meeting of the Conference, one-third of the elected Governors shall retire from office. Each retiring Governor shall be eligible for re-election provided that during the twelve months previous to his/her retirement he/she shall have attended at least two meetings of the Governors or of a committee of the Governors.

**22.05** Such persons only shall be eligible to, or qualified for, the office of Governor as shall be either ministers in connection with the Methodist Church or shall profess themselves members thereof. Whenever any Governor who, at the time of his/her appointment as a Governor, was a minister in connection with the said Church, shall cease to be, or to be recognised as a minister in connection therewith, he/she shall thereupon cease to be a Governor.

**22.06** Whenever any elected Governor shall die, or resign by writing under his/her hand, or become bankrupt, or refuse to act, or become incapable of acting, or shall permanently cease to reside in Ireland, or shall cease to profess himself/herself a member of the Methodist Church, his/her office shall thereupon become vacant, and the fact of every such vacancy, with the cause thereof, shall be recorded in the Minutes of the Governors, and shall be by them reported to the Conference at its next yearly meeting.

**22.07** Whenever the number of elected governors shall from any cause be reduced below twelve, the remaining Governors for the time being shall co-opt such and so many qualified persons to be Governors as may be required to make up the number to fifteen elected Governors, but every Governor so co-opted shall hold office only for the unexpired residue of the term of three years, for which the elected Governor to whose place he/she has been co-opted was elected.

**22.08** The Governors appointed by the Minister of Education take up office simultaneously for a period of three years. If any of these Governors cease to

serve for any reason before the expiry of this term the Board shall inform the Minister of Education and await his/her action in the matter.

### **Chaplain**

**22.09** The Governors shall nominate a minister in connection with the Methodist Church for appointment by the Conference as Chaplain to the College.

### **Purposes of the College and of the Endowments**

**22.10** The purposes of the College shall be:

- (a) To maintain the College for the use, benefit and advantage of the members of the Methodist Church and others.
- (b) To make provision for the education therein of students in the manner and subject to the conditions and provisions herein prescribed.
- (c) With the previous sanction of the Conference to apply or expend any part of the endowments as occasion shall require for the purpose of adding to, improving, repairing or beautifying the College and premises occupied therewith or otherwise for the benefit of the same or in building upon, laying out, or otherwise permanently improving the College and premises in such manner as the Governors shall deem to be advantageous or profitable.
- (d) To apply endowments held under any special trusts according to the terms of such trusts.

### **Principal and Other Officers**

**22.11** The Governors shall from time to time determine the qualifications and duties of and appoint the Principal of the College, the Warden of the McArthur Hall, and all other teachers, male and female, the Bursar, and all other officers, agents, and servants, whom they shall think it necessary or expedient to engage or employ in or about the College, or for the efficient conduct of the affairs thereof, or for the management of the endowments or otherwise howsoever; and the Governors may from time to time remove every or any persons so appointed for such cause as the Governors shall deem adequate without notice or on reasonable notice or on such notice as may have been agreed on not exceeding in any case six months' notice, or on payment of a reasonable sum in lieu of notice. The Governors shall and may from time to time fix the remuneration to be paid and the allowances to be made to all persons appointed by them and pay and make the same respectively.

Provided always that no appointment of the Principal of the College shall be final until the same shall have been submitted to and approved by the Conference.

(N.B. The Conference 1943 delegated to the Standing Committee (now incorporated in the Governance Board) power to confirm on behalf of the Conference the appointment of a Principal of the College under the terms of a resolution which is recorded in the Journal of the Conference.)

### **Powers of Visitation and Amendment by Conference**

**22.12** It shall be lawful for the Conference at any time to take the management of the College and of the endowments either wholly or partially into consideration, and for that purpose if thought expedient to appoint a visitor or visitors or such Committee or Committees as the Conference shall think fit, and to vary or rescind all or any of the by-laws and regulations theretofore at any time made or promulgated by the Governors and to direct the removal or abatement of any abuse connected with the management of the College or endowments or otherwise and to rectify or remove any just cause of complaint or dissension existing therein or with reference thereto. The Conference may, with the approval of the Ministry of Finance for Northern Ireland, from time to time at any yearly meeting, subject to the restrictions hereinafter mentioned, by Deed under the hand and seal of the person for the time being presiding at such Conference attested by three or more members of the said Conference present at such yearly meeting alter, vary or annul any of the administrative provisions of Part II of the Methodist College Act, 1928 or any provisions relating to the numbers qualification tenure of office or mode of election of the Governors of the College and enact and declare other clauses and provisions in the place and stead of those so altered, varied or annulled, or in addition to those in Part II of this Act contained. Save as hereinbefore provided every act, matter or thing which the Conference is by this Act authorised or empowered to do or sanction may be done or sanctioned by resolution of the yearly meeting of the Conference and may be evidenced and attested by writing under the hand of the Secretary for the time being of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

(For the Constitution and Administration of the Methodist College, see the Methodist College Act (Northern Ireland), 1928, and subsequent amendments to this Act).

## CHAPTER 23 - GURTEEN COLLEGE

- 23.01** Following the resolution of the Conference of 1946 to establish an Agricultural College, lands and premises were purchased at Gurteen, County Tipperary and the Conference of 1947 approved the founding of Gurteen Agricultural College. The Trust Deed of the College (hereafter called “The Principal Indenture”) was dated 2 September 1948. Under that Deed, new Trustees were appointed on 16 November 1978 and on 10 January 2001. Pursuant to Clause 27 in the Schedule of the Principal Indenture, an Indenture, supplemental to the 1948 Trust Deed, was made on 8 June 2002, in which the lands then vested in the Trustees were listed as those scheduled in the appointment of Trustees dated 8 January 2001 together with the lands in Folio 29579F, Co Tipperary comprising 31.35 hectares of the lands of Arragh Beg, County Tipperary acquired during 2001, and whereby the provisions of the Principal Indenture were annulled and replaced by the following provisions and trusts.
- 23.02** The College shall henceforth be known as and called “Gurteen College”.
- 23.03.** The Governors shall henceforth cause to be paid all outgoing payments payable in respect of the said lands and premises.
- 23.04.** The Governors shall cause the said lands and premises and all additions which may be made thereto to be maintained in good and proper repair and condition and adequately insured from loss or damage by fire or otherwise.
- 23.05** Gurteen College was established by the Methodist Church in Ireland and is responsible to it. It exists to promote the welfare of rural communities in Ireland and elsewhere, based on Christian principles, by developing and teaching agricultural science, animal and crop husbandry, horticulture, equine studies and such other courses as it shall from time to time see desirable to facilitate the care, conservation, and development of the land and the quality of rural life. The College acknowledges, respects and, in so far as possible, facilitates the religious convictions of all members of staff and students.
- 23.06** The Conference shall have the right from time to time to appoint two or more persons being members of or Ministers in full connexion with the Conference to visit the said College and to enquire into the management thereof and into the discipline and order thereof and into the nature and particulars of the



instruction given thereat and to report on all such matters and it shall be lawful for the Conference at any yearly meeting to take the management of the said College either wholly or partially into consideration and to vary or alter all or any of the rules and regulations theretofore at any time promulgated by the Governors.

### **The Governing Body**

- 23.07** The Governing Body of the College to be called “The Governors” shall be responsible to the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland (hereinafter called “the Conference”) for the management and supervision of the College and shall be annually nominated by the Governors to the Conference and shall consist of the Principal of the College, together with not more than sixteen persons to be appointed by the Conference, of whom not less than three and not more than five shall be ministers in full connexion with the Conference and with up to seven persons not necessarily members of the Methodist Church in Ireland and the remainder lay members of the Methodist Church in Ireland. Four of the Trustees shall be included amongst the Governors. The Governors shall meet together at least three times in the year and additional meetings shall be held at the request of five Governors or the Chairperson and the Principal. It shall be compulsory on the Governors to report annually to the Conference. The Governors may annually appoint sub-committees from its members to deal with certain aspects of the work of the College which shall meet as frequently as the Governors shall decide and all competent decisions of such sub-committees shall be reported to the Governors for consideration and decision on same by the Governors. In the event of vacancies arising between meetings of the Conference the Governors may co-opt additional persons who are qualified as hereinbefore provided to act as Governors, but such appointment shall be operative only until the ensuing Conference. Whenever any Governor shall resign by writing under his or her hand or become bankrupt or refuse to act or become incapable of acting or shall permanently cease to reside in Ireland or shall during the twelve months ended on the 1st day of June in any year have failed to attend at least one meeting of the Governors, he/she shall cease to be a Governor.
- 23.08** It shall be lawful for the Conference at its Annual Meeting to nominate and appoint a Principal for the College and the Governors, save while the Principal is a Methodist Minister, shall from time to time determine the remuneration and define the duties of such Principal provided further that previous to such appointment by Conference the Governors may submit a nomination of the

person to fill such office such nomination to be subject to the approval of the Conference. In the event of the necessary suspension or cessation of the Principal's functions during the year it shall be lawful for the Governance Board of the Methodist Church in Ireland to act with Conference powers in the appointment of a Principal.

- 23.09** The Governors shall in each year nominate a Methodist Minister or other suitably qualified person to the Conference for appointment as Chaplain of the College. The person so appointed by the Conference shall act as Chaplain of the College subject however to the discipline and administration of the Principal.
- 23.10** The Governors shall at their first meeting after the Annual Conference elect a Chairperson from their number for the year and such Chairperson and in his/her absence such person as shall be elected by the meeting as Chairperson from among the Governors present shall preside at such meeting of the Governors.
- 23.11** The Conference shall annually upon the nomination of the Governors appoint a fit and proper person to fill the office of Honorary Treasurer to the College for the ensuing year and it shall be lawful for the Governors from time to time to define the duties of such Treasurer.
- 23.12** The Conference may from time to time and at any Annual Meeting by Deed under the hand and seal of the President and Secretary for the time being of the Conference and attested by three or more members of the Conference present at such meeting vary or annul any of the provisions of this Deed herein contained and enact and declare other Clauses, provisions and Trusts in the place and stead of those so varied or annulled or in addition to those herein contained.
- 23.13** The Gurteen College premises shall always be vested in not less than six persons who are members of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- 23.14** When and so often as it shall happen that any Trustee for the time being shall die or shall refuse or become incapable to act or shall reside outside Ireland for in excess of one year or shall be adjudicated a bankrupt or discharged as an insolvent debtor or shall cease to be a member of the Methodist Church in Ireland or shall resign as Trustee in writing then in any such cases such person shall cease to be a Trustee and a vacancy shall be considered as having occurred in the number of Trustees and in a vacancy having occurred the

surviving or continuing Trustees (i) may nominate a new Trustee or Trustees qualified to so act and (ii) shall nominate new Trustees if the number of Trustees has fallen to eight, or less, and if the Conference approves the new Trustee or Trustees such person or persons shall be appointed a Trustee or Trustees by Deed executed by the remaining or continuing Trustees.

- 23.15** In case the surviving or continuing Trustees shall for twelve months after the number of Trustees shall have fallen below six fail or neglect to nominate any person or persons to fill up such vacancy or vacancies it shall be lawful for the Conference by writing under the hand of the President or Secretary for the time being to fill up such vacancy or vacancies by appointing a new Trustee or Trustees as the case may require without reference to the continuing or surviving Trustees.
- 23.16** The Trustees shall at their meeting prior to the Annual Conference elect a Chairperson for the year and such Chairperson and in his/her absence such person as shall be elected by the meeting shall preside at such meeting of the Trustees.
- 23.17** The Trustees shall have power to borrow money to purchase or acquire on lease property and with the consent of the Conference to sell or mortgage the property of the College following on a decision to that effect of the Governors.
- 23.18** If it shall happen that the income of Gurteen College shall fail to meet the current expenditure and the excess of expenditure over income shall have accumulated to such a sum as in the opinion of the Conference renders it inadvisable to continue the working of the said College, it shall be incumbent on the Trustees to wind up the College and to sell the property, premises, lands and effects of the College, and if the Trustees of the Conference for any reason deem it advisable they shall have the power of so winding up the College and selling its premises at any time and under any circumstances whatever, and it is hereby declared that if after such sale as aforesaid and after payment of all expenses, debts and liabilities there shall still remain any sum over and above such payment the surplus shall be at the disposal of the Conference for any purpose that the Conference may direct.

## CHAPTER 24 - COMMITTEE ON FAITH AND ORDER

**24.01** The Conference shall annually appoint a Committee on Faith and Order. The functions of the Committee shall be:

- (a) to scrutinize and make recommendations regarding any doctrinal statements and documents to be issued in the name of the Church.
- (b) to consider and make recommendations concerning any proposed revisions in orders of worship.
- (c) to study and report to the Conference on relevant issues of significance, subject to the approval either of the Governance Board or of the Conference itself.
- (d) accept and carry out any other assignments which are remitted to it by the Conference or the Governance Board.
- (e) to report annually to the Conference and to keep the Governance Board appraised of its work.

**24.02** The Committee shall consist of:

- The President of the Conference
- The Lay Leader of the Conference
- The General Secretary
- The ex-President of the Conference
- The ex-Lay Leader of the Conference (for one year)
- The President-Designate of the Conference
- The Lay Leader Designate of the Conference
- The Convenor of the Committee
- Twelve other members of whom not more than six shall be ministers.

**24.03** The Convenor shall be appointed by the Conference from among the membership of the Committee and shall hold office for a subsequent period of not more than six years. Other members of the Committee shall be appointed by the Conference for a period of four years. They shall be eligible for re-appointment by the Conference for a second period. A period of at least one year should elapse before any subsequent appointment.

## CHAPTER 25 - THE TRUSTEES OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND

**25.01** The Methodist Church in Ireland Act, 1915 (see Appendix 2), constituted and incorporated a body of Trustees known as "The Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland," with perpetual succession and a common seal, and vested in them the properties and funds formerly held by the Trustees of the Methodist Ministers' Sons' Fund, the Trustees of the Methodist Supernumerary Ministers' and Ministers' Widows' Fund, the Trustees for Donations and Bequests, and the Statutory Trustees, appointed under the provision of the Primitive Methodist Society of Ireland Act, 1871.

Provision is made for the administration by these Trustees of these properties and funds, and any other properties or funds which may from time to time be vested in them. The Act transferred to the new body of Trustees, these various properties and funds, subject to the trusts set out in the deeds and documents under which the various bodies of Trustees had formerly administered them, and subject to any directions and powers contained in the Act.

The principal deeds and documents declaring the trusts transferred by the Act are set out in the Schedules to the Act.

**25.02** The Methodist Church in Ireland Acts, 1928, (see Appendix 3) conferred additional powers upon the Statutory Trustees incorporated by the Methodist Church in Ireland Act, 1915.

- (a) Section 7 of the Act gave power to the Conference by resolution to declare that certain local trusts shall be transferred and vested in the Statutory Trustees under conditions set forth in the Act.
- (b) Sections 8 and 9 of the same Act gave power to the Trustees with the sanction of Conference to sell, grant, lease, mortgage, exchange or otherwise dispose of real or chattel real property, and also empowered them to appoint local trustees to administer any property vested in them.

### Rules and Regulations

**25.03** Section 25 of the Act of 1915 provides for the making of Rules and Regulations by the Trustees, with the consent of the Conference, for the management and

disposition of the various trusts vested in them by the Act. These Rules are found in Appendix 4.

### **Reporting**

**25.04** The Statutory Trustees shall report annually to the Governance Board on their activities.

## CHAPTER 26 - CHURCH PROPERTY

### The Property Board

- 26.01** The Property Board shall be responsible for the administration of the Chapel Fund and the Property Board Development Account.
- 26.02** The Chapel Fund is provided and maintained for the assistance of the following objects:
- (a) The purchase, erection, and repair of Churches and other Connexional property in Ireland.
  - (b) Legal and other expenses incidental to the maintenance of Connexional Trusts.
- 26.03** The Mission Development Account (formally the Property Board Development Account) is provided and maintained to encourage and assist in the purchase, erection or rental of buildings in areas where facilities for worship and witness do not exist, demand development due to missional potential or are deemed to be inadequate, due to growth. Applications to the Fund are assessed by the Connexional Team. Any application in excess of a level determined annually by the Governance Board shall be brought to the Governance Board prior to approval being granted. Applications should be made to the Connexional Team through the District Superintendent.
- 26.04** The Board shall be appointed annually by the Governance Board.
- The constitution of the Board shall be:
- The President of the Conference
  - The Lay Leader of the Conference
  - The General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland
  - One minister and one lay member nominated annually by each District Superintendent, after consulting with the District Advisory Committee
  - Six persons to be appointed annually by the Governance Board
  - A maximum of four persons co-opted by the Board.

## Terms of Reference of the Board

**26.05** The terms of reference of the Board are:

- (a) to deal with all matters relating to Plans, Buildings, Sales, Purchases, Loans, Grants, Lettings, Insurance, Transfers and Appointment of Trustees, Organs, Circuit Visitations, Deeds and Documents, Inspection of Manses, District Property Reports (where structural alterations are involved).
- (b) to consider applications to initiate legal action, and applications for permission to negotiate bank loans and overdrafts, and to submit its recommendations to the Governance Board for decision.
- (c) to receive from the Governance Board any policy recommendations regarding new churches, manses or other buildings. To proceed with such building plans to such cost limit as the Conference approves. If the estimated cost exceeds such a figure, to proceed until the scheme is ready for implementation and then to submit it to the Governance Board for final approval.
- (d) to be responsible for the erection, repair, purchase, sale and letting of manses. Such negotiations will be initiated at Circuit level and will be transmitted to the care of the Property Board by the District Superintendent.
- (e) to administer the Chapel Fund and the Property Board Development Account. Two Treasurers (a minister and a lay person) shall be appointed. They shall keep the accounts in a bank which, after audit, shall be presented annually to the Conference.
- (f) to appoint a Secretary who is responsible for plans and contingent matters.
- (g) to nominate to the Governance Board a Secretary of Visitation Commissions, who will arrange the Commissions and report on them to the Property Board, the Home Mission Department and the Districts and Circuits concerned.
- (h) to receive and disburse monies received from allocations from sales of property, donations, legacies, grants from the Connexional Assessment Fund, and other sources.
- (i) to be responsible for keeping under review the matter of compensation for church property and to report where necessary to the Governance Board.
- (j) to convene at least twice in each connexional year.



- (k) to delegate its functions, or any of them, to an Executive of not less than six members. When business is being transacted at an Executive meeting, the Superintendent of any District from which business has come will be invited to attend, and all present will be voting members of that meeting. In the event of a District Superintendent being dissatisfied with the decision being reached by the Executive in respect of any item of business from their District, he/she shall have the right to have the business deferred to the next full meeting of the Board.

### Erections, Enlargements, Purchases, etc.

- 26.06** (a) Before engaging in the business of building, or buying, a Circuit shall make certain that its contemplated plans are in line with the Mission of the Church.
- (b) Every application for permission to erect, enlarge, improve, purchase, demolish or sell a church, school, hall, manse, lands, or any other buildings used for Connexional purposes, to introduce a heating apparatus or to install, enlarge, rebuild an organ in Trust property (where structural alterations are involved), shall be made with the consent of the Church Council and Circuit Executive. It shall be presented on the prescribed form, signed by the Superintendent and by the Circuit Steward or by one or more of the acting or proposed Trustees, through the District Superintendent to the Property Board.
  - (c) The sanction of the Property Board shall be obtained for:
    - (i) all cases of erection, purchase or structural alteration of Trust premises.
    - (ii) all minor cases of improvement of any sort where a debt is likely to occur, or a loan or grant be required.
  - (d) Before sanctioning any scheme, the Property Board shall be satisfied either that the entire outlay will be met, or that at least two-thirds of the money has been promised or subscribed.

The sanction of the Property Board is required for any additional expenditure which may be ten per cent beyond the amount of the scheme originally sanctioned.

The Property Board shall also be satisfied that all land required for the purpose of the scheme has been or will be legally secured to the Connexion for the intended object, and duly vested in Trustees.

- (e) In applications to build, alter, repair, enlarge Trust premises no stipulation for any particular amount of grant shall be entertained.

- (f) Where the Property Board has purchased a site, the ground shall be vested in the Statutory Trustees.
- (g) The Property Board may acquire by mutual agreement with the Circuit concerned the site of any strategically placed property, the development of which would be of benefit to the Connexion. The property so acquired shall be vested in the Statutory Trustees.
- (h) The provisions of sections (a) to (g) above shall not apply to Wesley College Dublin, Methodist College Belfast, Edgehill College and Gurteen College.

### Grants and Loans

**26.07** (a) Applications for grants shall be made on the prescribed form when the work has been completed. Grants cannot be given where the rules have not been observed.

(b) Where a grant is authorised, an audited statement of income and expenditure in connection with the scheme shall be presented before the grant is paid.

(c) A grant shall not be paid in respect of any building that is not adequately insured with the Methodist Insurance Company, or that is not secured to the Connexion.

**26.08** (a) A Loan Fund being in existence within the Property Board for the relief of causes where large bank interest charges would have to be borne, the Property Board is empowered to make loans, as far as the Fund will permit, subject to the conditions specified.

(b) Applications shall be made on the prescribed form and shall be approved by the District Superintendent before being presented to the Property Board.

(c) In each case a loan can only be granted where a satisfactory security for payment within the prescribed time has been given on the proper form.

(d) Loans shall be subject to an agreed rate of interest. The period of the repayment of such loans shall not exceed five years.

### Sales or Lettings

**26.09** (a) Trust property held upon the Statutory Trusts may in whole or in part be mortgaged, granted in Fee Farm, demised let or sold by the Trustees, or the majority of them, with the sanction of the Governance Board subject to the

limitations, restrictions and provisions (if any) contained in the Lease, Deed or Grant, under which the Trust property is held.

- (b) Pursuant to the provisions of Section 6 of the Methodist Church in Ireland Acts, 1928, the Conference delegated its powers affecting or relating to the sale or letting or other dealing with Trust property to the Standing Committee of the Statutory Trustees; and by resolution of Conference, 1971, further delegated those powers to the Property Board with full powers of the Conference between its sittings in all of the said matters which the Property Board shall deem to be matters of urgency.
- (c) Sales of Trust property involving questions of policy relating to the mission of the Church shall be initiated by the Conference or the Governance Board.
- (d) Applications for permission to sell, let or mortgage churches, halls, schools, manses, houses, grounds or any other property held by the Connexion, shall be made through the District Superintendent, on the prescribed form, signed by the Circuit Superintendent and a Circuit Steward, having been approved by the Trustees concerned, the Church Council and Circuit Executive.
- (e) All sales of property shall be subject to:
  - (i) The approval by the Property Board of the terms of sale.
  - (ii) The prior agreement between the Circuit concerned and the Property Board as to the allocation of the proceeds of sale.
  - (iii) Certification of the sale by the President and Secretary of the Church. Certificates of Sanction are printed as in Appendix 6.
- (f) Sales of property shall be deemed to include compensation or insurance monies received for replacement of Church property.
- (g) All sales of Church property sanctioned by the Governance Board or Property Board shall be printed in the Report of the Property Board and in the Minutes of the Governance Board, together with the directions of the Governance Board as to the allocation of the proceeds of sales.
- (h) Before sanction is given to the sale of any place of worship bearing an inscription such as “Methodist Church,” a promise shall be given by the Trustees or vendors to have the inscription removed before parting with the property. Where sales have been effected and old inscriptions allowed to

remain, friendly efforts shall be made to have these inscriptions removed or effaced.

- (i) In all sales of Trust property, the Superintendent concerned shall at the time of such sale inform the Secretary of the Property Board regarding the custody of the records and vessels belonging to the property.
- (j) Final negotiations for sale or letting of any Trust property shall not be undertaken until the Property Board has given its approval.
- (k) It is a condition of all grants for the purchase, enlargement or structural alteration of property for Connexional purposes, that if and when it is sold or let or transferred to other use, the funds from which the grants were made shall be recouped for their expenditure.
- (l) In all lettings of Trust property there shall be an Agreement, properly executed, safeguarding the Trustees against any liability for rates and taxes incurred through such lettings, and against claims for accidents during the tenancy. Such Form of Agreement must be obtained from the Secretary of the Property Board (See Appendix 6).

### Allocation of Proceeds of Sales

- 26.10** (a) Subject in certain cases to the approval of the Governance Board the purposes to which proceeds from Trust property are to be applied are laid down in the Statutory Trusts and must be strictly observed. Where the Statutory Trusts have not been adopted powers of sale or letting may vary considerably. Trustees contemplating sale or letting are advised to read the Deed carefully before taking any decision.
- (b) Circuits which have received permission to effect sales of property, and which have completed such sales shall without delay send that part of the proceeds of these sales which is to be allocated by the Governance Board, to the Treasurer of the Statutory Trustees who shall receive these monies in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Methodist Church in Ireland Acts, 1915 and 1928.

### **The Joseph Rank Trust**

- 26.11** All applications for financial assistance from The Joseph Rank Trust must be made through the Property Board.

All schemes for which assistance will be sought shall seek the guidance of the Property Board before an application is submitted to the Trust.

Should the Property Board be unable to approve an application to the Trust, the Circuit concerned shall be advised accordingly and the decision of the Board with a full report shall be brought to the Governance Board for review and final decision.

### **Trust Deeds**

- 26.12** (a) As the legal security of Connexional property is of great importance the Conference has declared the Trusts on which it is desired all such property should be held. These Trusts are now embodied as a Schedule to the Methodist Church in Ireland Acts, 1928, and they thus have statutory effect except where the Conference may direct otherwise.
- (b) Superintendents are directed to have the sites for new churches, halls, schools, manses, and other Connexional property settled on the Statutory Trusts. They are also directed to have all existing property transferred from their former Trusts to the Statutory Trusts on the appointment of new Trustees. Forms for use in the appointment of Trustees adopting the Statutory Trusts must be obtained from the Secretary of the Property Board. It is expected that solicitors will adhere to these forms and that where any substantial departure therefrom is found necessary in the drafting of a Deed such drafting shall not be completed without the approval of the Property Board. (See Appendix 7).
- (c) Difficulty and possible loss can arise from the neglect to have a Trust declared and the Deed executed before buildings have been placed on the grounds. It is earnestly urged upon all concerned to see that such neglect shall not arise. Buildings should never be occupied and used, whether for church, manse or school, until they have been legally settled.
- (d) Superintendents are directed to make careful inquiry in relation to the Trust Deeds of all property on their Circuits, to take all necessary steps for the legal security of the property and the safety of the Deeds.
- (e) Superintendents are directed to have entered in the Circuit Schedule Book the main items of information regarding each Trust and to have the Deeds and other legal documents of their Circuit duly lodged with the Connexional Registrar of Deeds and Documents.
- (f) Where no safe is provided in connection with a Circuit the Policies of Insurance shall be forwarded to the Representative in Ireland of the Methodist Insurance Company for safe custody.

- (g) General information regarding terms of Deeds, etc., shall be supplied by the Registrar to Superintendents on their application for such, but without issue of documents, except in cases of Deeds required for legal purposes which have been sanctioned by the Governance Board or the Property Board; in which case the Superintendent shall acknowledge, not only by personal receipt but also by duplicate receipt from the acting solicitor.
- (h) A Superintendent. who, when leaving a Circuit is still responsible for documents obtained from the Conference Safe relating to the Circuit, shall leave for his/her successor, in the Schedule Book, all particulars as to when and for what purpose they were obtained and their place of custody, in order that as soon as possible the object for which they were taken out may be accomplished, and the documents returned to the safe. He/she shall also furnish similar particulars to the Registrar.
- (i) Persons sending or returning documents to the Registrar should forward them by registered post; if through neglect of this the documents are lost the sender shall be held responsible for the expense of replacing them.
- (j) When Trust property has been sold the Superintendent of the Circuit shall inform the Registrar of the date of the sale, the price obtained, and the manner in which the money has been or is to be applied, in order that a record of the transaction may be entered in the Register.
- (k) With regard to new Deeds and Leases, or the appointment of new Trustees, the following rules shall be observed:
  - (i) The consent of the Property Board shall be obtained before any action is taken.
  - (ii) The drafts of all new Deeds shall be sent for approval to the Property Board.

A grant towards the cost of such Deeds shall not in any case be given unless these rules are observed.
- (l) With the idea of economising, the Lease and Trust Deed may sometimes be embodied in one document. This is not always desirable and may, contrary to the intention of the Lease, bring the landlord into privity with the Trusts and involve the question of reversion in the event of the property ceasing to be used for Trust purposes.

## Care of Property and Visitation Commissions

**26.13** (a) All property belonging to the Methodist Church in Ireland shall have an annual visual inspection, carried out by locally appointed Church officials, paying attention to woodwork for signs of infestation, rot, dampness, severe mould on walls; and where there is any concern, should seek professional advice in relation to remedial works.

(b) All Circuits shall be visited from time to time by a Connexional Visitation Commission which shall inquire into the work of the Circuit and the condition of all trust property on the Circuit. This is in addition to the annual visual inspection referred to above in 27.13(a).

Manses and other property attached to Institutions and Departments of the Methodist Church in Ireland shall be subject to visitation as are manses on Circuits. Such visitations are to be arranged by the Secretary for Visitations and shall take place once in five years.

Two members of the Commission will be appointed by the Board of Governors, or other Committee involved, and two by the Property Board. The report of such visitation shall be made to the Property Board. This is in addition to the annual inspection visual inspection referred to in paragraph 27.13 (a).

(c) The Visitation Secretary shall inform District Superintendents of the circuits due for a Commission in the following year.

(d) District Superintendents shall:

(i) appoint three persons, including a person properly qualified to give a professional opinion of the property.

(ii) receive a report from the Visitation Secretary on the Commissions completed during the year.

(e) The Visitation Secretary shall receive the names of the District appointees and shall appoint two representatives as from the Property Board.

(f) In the Autumn, the Visitation Secretary shall send out all the forms (including the Home Mission form on Life and Mission) to the Circuit Superintendents. Visitation Chairpersons shall be given the names of the Commission members.

Superintendents and Chairpersons shall negotiate a suitable date for the Visitation as early in the Connexional year as possible.

- (g) As early as possible the report on Life and Mission shall be completed by the Superintendent, in consultation with other staff and stewards, and returned to the Chairperson for copying and distribution to the Commission members to give them time to familiarise themselves with the work of the circuit. The response on this form shall form the basis for the discussion of the life and mission of the circuit at the Circuit Executive Meeting convened for the purpose.
- (h) Inspections of the Electrical Installations by a Registered Contractor and the Fabric of the Building by a Qualified Building Surveyor or Timber Preservation Company shall be carried out at five and ten year intervals respectively and the reports forwarded to the Commission Chairperson two weeks before the visit. This will give the members of the Commission with expertise in these matters an indication of areas of concern. In cases where an installation is new or where alterations have been carried out then a test certificate should be provided for the COMPLETE installation, and this will be valid for a five-year period. These reports should be prepared by an approved NICEIC Contractor in Northern Ireland and a RECI approved Contractor or the ESB in the Republic of Ireland.
- (i) The Superintendent shall have all necessary receipts for deeds available for the report on the day of the Visitation Commission.
- (j) There shall be no Circuit Executive Meeting on the day of the Visitation, but the Chairperson of the Commission shall complete the report and send it to the Secretary for Visitation Commissions for immediate duplication and distribution.
- (k) The Secretary for Visitation Commissions shall retain the original report but send a copy of the full report to the Circuit Superintendent, and the Chairperson. Copies of the summary will be sent to other ministers of the circuit and the stewards in each society, for consideration by the Circuit Executive Meeting [[see chapter 11.30](#)]
- (l) Within six weeks of the visit the Chairperson of the Commission, with any members of the Commission the Chairperson feels should attend, and any other members who wish to be present, shall meet with the Circuit in an Executive Meeting to discuss the reports. Significant time shall be allocated to the discussion of the Life and Mission of the Circuit prior to any discussion on property. All relevant points of the discussion shall be agreed, recorded and



forwarded to the Visitation Commissions Secretary immediately following the meeting.

- (m) Copies of the relevant points of the discussion shall be sent to the Secretary for Visitation Commissions who shall forward them with the Commission Report Summary, to the District Superintendent, the Secretary of the Property Board and the Secretary of the Home Mission Department.
- (n) The District Superintendent shall discuss all reports with the circuits regarding prioritising and funding the work to be done and planning a time scale. It is the responsibility of the District Superintendent to ensure that the recommendations of Visitation Commissions are implemented.
- (o) The District Superintendent shall submit this consultation report to the Property Board and the Home Mission Department.
- (p) Progress shall be monitored by the District Superintendent.

### **Insurance of Trust Property**

- 26.14** (a) Superintendents shall pay special attention to the insurance of churches, manses and other buildings against loss or damage by fire or any other cause. They shall enter particulars of such insurance, including amounts, in the Circuit Schedule Book and shall furnish these particulars annually on the prescribed form to the Secretary of the District. Attention is drawn to the importance of having the Circuit furniture in the ministers' residences, and the personal property of the ministers, insured against fire. It is recommended that the heating apparatus in churches and halls be insured against damage by frost or any other cause.
- (b) All ministers are advised to take out a comprehensive insurance in respect of their own property and liabilities.
  - (c) District Secretaries shall enquire annually whether all Trust property within their Districts is adequately insured. The Secretary of the Property Board shall furnish annually to the Superintendent of each District a list of such properties in his/her District as are considered to be inadequately insured, in order that an enquiry may be made at the Synod.
  - (d) Superintendent Ministers, Trustees and Circuit Executive meetings shall take adequate action to obtain compensation or insurance payments in respect of damage to property.

## Insurance of Church Officers

- 26.15** (a) The attention of Superintendent ministers is called to the necessity of making provision by insurance to meet the serious liabilities imposed by third party and common law liability on Trustees and Circuit Executives to pay compensation in their capacity as employers for accidents happening to organists, caretakers, and others employed on or about Trust premises which may arise out of, or in the course of their employment, causing death or disablement.
- (b) School teachers, lay evangelists and other workers shall be insured by the Circuits or Committees employing them.
- (c) Trustees and members of Circuit Executive meetings should note that in the event of non-insurance they may be held personally liable for compensation for persons injured while in their employment.

## Day and Sunday School Insurance

- 26.16** (a) Certain legal liabilities are imposed on any person or persons in charge of or in control of a child or children in connection with accidents that may occur while the child or children are on their premises or under their supervision. If through any defect in the premises or negligence in arrangement, a child meets with an accident while on school premises, or while under the care of a school authority, that authority will be held to be liable. It is therefore directed that Circuit Executive meetings shall effect adequate insurance to cover all such risks and that the policies shall extend to all meetings, organisations and all other functions connected with week-day and Sunday School work, wherever and whenever held.
- (b) All teachers and pupils of schools under Methodist management shall be insured by the officers of the Institution concerned against liabilities imposed by the relevant Acts of Parliament. With regard to other schools on Methodist property, Superintendents are directed to ensure that adequate insurances have been effected at the charge of the lessees.

## Property Owners' Liability

- 26.17** Property Owners' Liability Policy (Third Party Risks) shall be taken out to cover all Trusts on each Circuit. Circuits shall make provision to insure all voluntary workers of whom they make use.

## Legal Proceedings

**26.18** No lawsuit relating to churches, schools or other Trust property shall be commenced without the consent of the Governance Board through the Property Board. Unless such consent or direction has first been obtained, the parties proceeding shall be held responsible for all expenses incurred by such lawsuit.

## CHAPTER 27 - MINISTERS' RETIREMENT SCHEMES

### **Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund**

- 27.01** The object of the Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund is to secure provision for ministers connected with the Methodist Conference in Ireland who have retired, and for the widows of ministers who were in connection with the Conference at the time of their death.
- 27.02** A Ministerial Treasurer/Secretary and a Lay Treasurer shall be appointed annually by the Governance Board. The Ministerial Treasurer/Secretary shall keep a register of all claimants on the Fund and shall perform such other duties as are required of him/her. The Treasurers shall keep an account in a Bank in the name of the Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund. The Fund shall be administered by the Finance Department under the direction of the Ministerial secretary and in line with the policies approved by the Governance Board.
- 27.03** The income of the Fund is derived from the following sources:
- (a) a share of the Comprehensive Assessment
  - (b) subscriptions, donations and legacies
  - (c) the interest and dividends arising from the invested capital
- The Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland are authorised by Statute (Methodist Church in Ireland Act, 1915), to hold real, leasehold, or personal estate, devised or bequeathed, or legally assured to them upon or for any trusts connected with the Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund, and by direction of the Conference all such moneys or estates are held by the Statutory Trustees.
- 27.04** The scale of allowances shall be determined annually by the Governance Board and shall be printed in the *Minutes of Conference* each year. Allowances shall be paid monthly in arrears.
- 27.05** The minimum age of retirement is sixty-five years. The Conference may permit a minister to retire for exceptional reasons. Ministers wishing to apply for permission to retire at the ensuing Conference shall submit their application in writing to the District Superintendent before 30th September.

- 27.06** A minister who is required by the Conference to retire for some specific reason other than age or ill health shall receive such allowance as the Conference may determine.
- 27.07** When a retired minister, or minister's widow, by reason of extreme infirmity or any other cause, is deemed to be unfit to receive the allowance personally, the Treasurers may appoint some competent person to receive the allowance on his/her behalf.
- 27.08** If a minister who retired at or after the Conference of 1948 subsequently marries, his widow becomes eligible for a widow's pension under the National Insurance Act, or a corresponding allowance from the Fund-provided she was over fifty years of age when her husband died and had been married for three years or more. If previous to such marriage she had been a beneficiary of the Fund her original allowance shall be revived.
- 27.09** A minister's widow who re-marries shall cease to be eligible for allowances from the Fund.
- 27.10** A retired minister or minister's widow ceasing to be a member of the Methodist Church shall cease to be eligible for any allowances from the Fund.
- 27.11** When, through death or otherwise, a retired minister or minister's widow shall cease to be a beneficiary of the Fund, the Superintendent of the Circuit in which he or she resided shall forthwith inform the Ministerial Secretary of the Fund. He/she shall also report any change of residence which may take place in the case of retired ministers or ministers' widows residing on his/her Circuit.
- 27.12** A minister who served the Church and had resigned prior to 1 July 1984 is eligible for a proportion of an allowance from the Fund in accordance with our Rules and Regulations.
- 27.13** By Deed of Settlement the late Mr. Charles Cookman McMillan, of New Zealand, donated a sum of money to found the "Rev. Gibson McMillan Supernumerary Fund" in memory of his father. The endowments of the Fund are vested in the Trustees of Charitable Funds under a Scheme of Management, dated 9th May 1930, established by an order of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, the income thereof being paid to the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland by whom the Fund is administered.

The Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland acting under the provisions of the aforesaid Scheme of Management, have made Rules and Regulations for the Administration of the Fund.

### **Ministers Serving Overseas: Retirement Allowances**

- 27.14** Retired ministers of the Irish Conference who have served overseas, and widows/widowers of same, shall be entitled to the allowance from the Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund based on the full period of service at home and overseas.

### **Retirement Benefits Scheme**

- 27.15** The Retirement Benefits Scheme is administered in accordance with the provisions of a Trust Deed dated 1 July 1984, amended by a Supplementary Deed dated 22 December 1992 and the definitive Trust Deed and Rules dated 23 September 1996. The Scheme is approved by the Pensions Scheme Officer of the Inland Revenue.
- 27.16** The Governance Board, acting under the delegated authority of the Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland has the power to appoint and remove the Trustees, who have been appointed in accordance with the Trust Deed and Rules. Decisions of the Trustees are taken in accordance with the Scheme Rules by a majority of Trustees present at any meeting.
- 27.17** All persons in receipt of a Stipend, including missionaries, who are aged not less than eighteen years and not more than sixty-five years, who do not have permission to be without pastoral charge and are either Ministers or Probationers are eligible to join the scheme.

A person who has not otherwise become eligible to join the Scheme may, with the permission of the Church and the Trustees, be admitted to membership of the Scheme on such terms and conditions as to benefits and otherwise, and with effect from such date as may be agreed with the Church and the Trustees.

- 27.18** The Trustees are required to produce a Statement of Investment Principles in accordance with Section 35 of the Pensions Acts 1995. In the preparation of the Statement the Trustees obtain appropriate professional advice and consult the principal employer. The Trustees review the Statement annually in conjunction with the Scheme advisers and the Scheme Actuary, taking

particular note of any changes in the Scheme liabilities and of the position regarding the Minimum Funding Requirements.

- 27.19** The day-to-day management of the Scheme investments has been delegated by the Trustees to investment managers. The custody and safekeeping of the Scheme is provided by the custodians appointed by each of the investment managers. As part of the statement of investment principles the Trustees have determined that the Custodian will supply, where appropriate, a statement to the effect that all dividends, interest payments and tax repayments due to the Scheme have been allocated and all transactions settled in timely manner. The Trustees review from time to time the suitability of the Custodians and arrange for any necessary replacement.
- 27.20** The audited accounts, made up to the anniversary date of the Scheme as required by the Pensions Act 1995, are presented to the Governance Board and subsequently to the Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
- 27.21** A minister or probationer about to be married shall inform the Treasurer of the Ministers' Retirement Fund, in writing, of her/his intention, and of the respective ages of herself/himself and the intended spouse.
- 27.22** The provisions and regulations in respect of the Scheme are printed annually in the *Minutes of Conference*.

### **Ministers' Disability Fund**

- 27.23** The Fund was established by the Conference in 1995. The purpose of the Fund is to provide defined financial benefits when a minister is unable, through sickness or disablement, to perform the duties of the Ministry.
- 27.24** For the purpose of the Fund "sickness" or "disablement" means a continuous period of illness or disablement in respect of which evidence satisfactory to the Church has been produced showing that the minister because of her/his illness or disablement has not been able to perform the duties of the Ministry and as a result is no longer stationed.
- 27.25** (a) All ministers in Full Connexion who were receiving a stipend and were in full time service prior to their disability, who have not yet reached their normal retirement date or taken early retirement under The Methodist Church in Ireland Retirement Benefits Scheme are eligible to benefit.
- (b) At the discretion of the Fund Administrators, ministers in the service of the Connexion who do not satisfy the above conditions may be granted eligibility.

- (c) At the discretion of the Fund Administrators, eligibility may be subject to satisfactory medical evidence being obtained.
- (d) At the discretion of the Fund Administrators, special terms, exclusions, waiting periods and premiums may be applied to the minister and/or the Church.
- (e) A minister who leaves service or who reaches her/his normal retirement date will no longer be eligible to benefit.

**27.26** Those eligible shall make application on the appropriate form to the Ministries Policies and Procedures Committee which shall make a recommendation to the General Secretary after consultation with the Fund Administrators. Application Forms may be obtained from the General Secretary. It is assumed that the applicant is in receipt of all State Benefits to which he/she is entitled before applying to the Fund for financial assistance.

**27.27** The benefits of the Fund are set out in the '[Disability Fund and Related Absence Leave Policy](#)'.

**27.28** Benefit shall cease when the minister is certified as medically fit to resume her/his full ministerial duties, or if earlier, at the date the minister leaves service, takes early retirement or reaches her/his normal retirement date.

**27.29** (a) Where a minister undertakes part-time remunerative work whilst still receiving benefit from the Fund, he/she must notify the Fund Administrators of this fact and declare the amount of the remuneration.

- (b) Where a minister resumes her/his employment after having received benefit but later has to cease work, a new application shall be required.
- (c) Any person receiving benefit from the Fund may be requested periodically to submit further medical evidence.

**27.30** (a) Members of the Ministers' Disability Fund shall contribute a set percentage of annual stipend, deducted at source, as determined by the Governance Board from time to time.

- (b) The Church shall contribute an amount through the Connexional Assessment, as determined by the Governance Board each year through the Connexional Finance Committee.



**27.31** The Fund Administrators consist of the following:

- The General Secretary
- A Treasurer of the Ministers' Benevolent Fund
- Two trustees of the Retirement Benefits Scheme
- The Secretary of the Irish Methodist Ministers' Retirement Fund
- The Head of Finance.

**27.32** Where a minister qualifies for benefits from the Disability Fund but instead elects to take ill-health early retirement from the Retirement Benefits Scheme, the Fund will contribute an amount to the Retirement Benefits Scheme, as determined by the Scheme Actuary. This amount will reflect the cost to the Scheme of not applying an early retirement reduction factor to the minister's Scheme benefits.

### **Methodist Ministers' Retirement Income Augmentation Fund**

**27.33** The Fund was established by the Conference in 2003 to ensure that ministers who were received into Full Connexion at or before the Conference of 1984 and their widows/widowers should have a minimum income from all sources as approved by the Governance Board. The approved minimum income levels are printed annually in the *Minutes of Conference*.

**27.34** The Conference of 2010 extended eligibility to ministers and widows/widowers received into Full Connexion after the 1984 Conference.

**27.35** The Conference of 2011 introduced a range of new conditions:

- (a) Ministers who served in the Stipendiary ministry of the Methodist Church in Ireland and belonged to the IMMRF or RBS, and who served the required minimum period of service in this capacity, and spouses of same, are eligible to apply to the Fund.
- (b) For those who retired at Normal Retirement Date (or earlier due to ill health but remained a member of the IMMRF or RBS to Normal Retirement Date), the minimum period of service is 10 years.
- (c) For those who left the Stipendiary ministry of the Methodist Church in Ireland before Normal Retirement Date, the minimum period of service is 20 years.
- (d) Eligible Ministers must have 20 years' service in order to qualify for the normal level of benefits under the Fund. For eligible Ministers with less than 20 years'

service, the Minimum Income Levels (as published in the *Minutes of Conference*) will be reduced on a pro-rata basis, e.g., 50% for 10 years' service.

- (e) In cases of need, the independent Administrators can use their discretion to allow eligibility or increase the standard benefits, in consultation with the Head of Finance and in line with the policies approved by the Governance Board.
- (f) Payments will normally be made monthly in arrears once eligibility has been established and the appropriate amount calculated.
- (g) Potential applicants should make contact with either of the two independent Administrators listed in the *Minutes of Conference*.

## CHAPTER 28 - METHODIST MINISTERS' MEDICAL FUND

### The Name and Objects of the Fund

**28.01** The name of the Fund shall be the "Methodist Ministers' Medical Fund."

**28.02** The objects of the Fund shall be to provide:

- (a) Grants in respect of medical, dental, and optical expenses of a minister, a dependent member of a minister's family, or a minister's widow.
- (b) Maternity grants in respect of the confinement of a minister or a minister's wife while stationed in the Republic of Ireland.
- (c) Funeral grants in respect of the death of a minister, a dependent member of a minister's family, or a minister's spouse.

In determining the amount of any grant, account shall be taken of the provisions of the National Insurance Acts (Northern Ireland), or of any similar Acts in the Republic of Ireland, in order that parity of benefits may be maintained, so far as possible, between beneficiaries residing in Northern Ireland and those residing in the Republic of Ireland.

### Administration

**28.03** (a) The Fund shall be administered under the direction of the Ministerial Secretary, the Secretary of the Conference, and the Head of Finance, subject to the policies set by the Governance Board.

(b) The officer of the Fund, who shall be appointed annually by the Governance Board, shall be a Ministerial Secretary.

(c) The Ministerial Secretary shall report annually to the Governance Board.

(d) The financial year of the Fund shall terminate on the 31st December. A financial statement and budget will be submitted in the format and in line with the timescale specified by the Governance Board.

- 28.04** (a) The term 'Minister' shall mean a preacher in full connexion with the Conference, or a probationer appointed by the Conference to a Station.
- (b) The term 'dependent' shall mean the father, mother, children, or other relative who at the time of the minister's death are wholly or partially supported.
- (c) The term 'representative' shall mean the widow, widower or other dependent of a minister, but failing such, may be a person approved by the Board.

### **Income**

- 28.05** The income of the Fund shall be derived from:
- (a) Subscriptions from stipendiary ministers. These shall be based upon such scale as the Conference may from time to time determine.
- (b) Assessments on Circuits, Departments and Institutions as determined by the Conference.
- (c) Donations, legacies, and dividends on invested funds.

### **Payment of Contributions**

- 28.06** Contributions from ministers, Circuits, Departments and Institutions shall be paid quarterly to the Treasurer of the Trustees who shall remit them to the Ministerial Treasurer of the Fund.

### **Assets of the Fund**

- 28.07** The capital and income of the Fund, except where such are impressed for a specific purpose, shall be available for payment of grants as the Board may determine.

### **Benefits of the Fund**

- 28.08** The benefits of the Fund shall be available to stipendiary ministers, and those related to them, to retired ministers (and those related to them) who at the time of their retirement, were contributors to the Fund and to widows of ministers.

Ministers 'without pastoral charge' in Ireland, and those 'permitted to serve' elsewhere, shall be considered to be outside the scope of the Fund both in regard to contributions and benefits. A minister who has been given leave of

absence for not more than four years may apply to have his/her case considered.

A minister who resigns or ceases to be recognised as such with the Methodist Church in Ireland shall have no claim on the Fund.

## 1. SICKNESS GRANTS

In determining the amount of grants in respect of the illness of a minister, a dependent member of a minister's family, or a minister's widow or widower, account shall be taken of the provisions made by the National Insurance Acts (Northern Ireland), or any similar Acts in the Republic of Ireland, to meet such cases. Only in circumstances for which State provisions are deemed to be inadequate will grants be made from the Fund. Those who enter hospital, either in Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland, shall avail themselves of all the benefits provided by the appropriate Health Authority. Any grants which may be made from the Fund shall be calculated on this basis, except in cases of extreme urgency, or of exceptional circumstances approved by the Board. Any grant given shall be on the basis of Hospital General Ward charges.

Ministers stationed in the Republic of Ireland who are insured under the National Insurance Acts (Northern Ireland) shall acquaint themselves of the benefits available under the Health Services - these include medical, dental and optical treatment.

Ministers residing in Northern Ireland and those related to ministers whose expenses by reason of illness exceed the amount provided by State aid, may apply to the Fund for a grant in respect of the deficit.

Where extra expenses for which the State makes no provision are incurred by a minister, a dependent member of his/her family, or by a minister's widow or widower, the applicant shall submit full details of such expenses for consideration by the Board. Grants in such cases shall be confined to payments in respect of the cost of medicines and treatment not covered by the Health Services, additional expenses incurred in the home by reason of the illness, and such travelling expenses as the Board may approve.

## 2. FUNERAL GRANT

On the death of a minister, the officers of the Fund are empowered to make a grant immediately to the surviving spouse or representative of the deceased. The amount of such grant shall be determined by the Governance Board. In exceptional circumstances the officers may supplement the amount of the

grant approved by the Governance Board. Should the minister be unmarried, a widow or widower, the amount payable to the representative shall be decided by the officers of the Fund. At their discretion the officers of the Fund may make such a grant as they consider appropriate towards the funeral expenses of a minister's widow or widower, or a dependent member of her/his family.

### **Regulations Sanctioned by the Governance Board**

- 28.09** (a) All applications for grants shall be submitted on the prescribed form obtainable from the Secretary of the Fund. Receipts must be sent with each application.
- (b) No grant shall be given where the total expense has been less than a sum to be determined by the Governance Board.
- (c) In calculating expenses in respect of medical, dental, or optical treatment it shall not be permissible to bring forward expenses from a previous year.
- (d) The Treasurers are authorised to make payments where the application is straightforward and in order. All other applications shall be dealt with by the sub-committee. Where a large amount is under consideration, the Treasurers may make an interim payment in consultation with the Chairman and Secretary of the Board, the balance to be dealt with at the next meeting of the sub-committee.

## CHAPTER 29 - FUNDS FOR MINISTERS' CHILDREN

### The Children's Fund

- 29.01** The Children's Fund provides allowances for the maintenance and education of the children of ministers, and probationers in connection with the Irish Conference.
- 29.02** The income of the Fund is provided from the Comprehensive Assessment Fund, as the Governance Board may from year to year determine.
- 29.03** The Governance Board shall annually appoint a lay person as Treasurer of the Fund and a Secretary who shall be a minister. The Treasurer shall keep an account in a bank in the name of "The Methodist Ministers' Children's Fund." The Secretary shall keep an up-to-date register of children who are claimants on the Fund.

### Administration

- 29.04** The Children's Fund shall be administered by the Head of Finance under the direction of the Ministerial Secretary and Lay Treasurer and subject to the policies approved by the Governance Board.
- 29.05** Payments of allowances to children shall be made to their parents or guardians; but the officers of the Fund, with the approval of the General Secretary of the Methodist Church, shall have power under exceptional circumstances to determine otherwise with regard to the payment of the allowances.
- 29.06** Those entitled to the benefits of the Fund shall be children, step-children or legally adopted children of ministers and probationers, and of retired and deceased ministers, within such limits of age as may from time to time be determined by the Governance Board. If a minister has been given permission to be without pastoral charge, his/her children shall cease to receive allowances from the Fund. An exception may be made where the minister is unwaged, subject to the discretion of the officers of the Fund.

- 29.07** Where an application for an exceptional payment is made for educational purposes and does not fall within the existing rules of the fund, the officers of the fund, with the consent of the Governance Board, may make a payment for the benefit of the child. Such application shall be made no later than the 30th September in the year in which it applies.
- 29.08** Maintenance allowances shall commence in the quarter following a child's birth. In the event of a child beginning to earn his or her own living or in the event of a child's death the maintenance allowance shall cease with the payment made in the following quarter.
- 29.09** If a minister shall marry after having permanently retired, the children of such marriage shall have no claim upon the Fund.
- 29.10** Children of ministers who from any cause cease to be recognised as being in full connexion with the Methodist Church in Ireland, have no claim upon the Fund.
- 29.11** The allowances from the Fund for maintenance and education shall be as the Governance Board may from time to time determine.
- 29.12** The birth, legal adoption, death, employment of a child or the continuance of secondary education beyond the age of eighteen must be reported immediately to the Secretary of the Children's Fund.
- 29.13** Allowances from the Fund become due at the end of September, December, March, and June, and shall be paid not later than the fifteenth of the following month.

### **The Ministers' Sons' Fund and The Ministers' Daughters' Fund**

- 29.14** In addition to the allowances for education provided by the Children's Fund, special provision is made for the education of the sons of Irish Methodist ministers at the Colleges in Ireland by means of the "Ministers' Sons' Fund." The income of this Fund consists of the interest on certain sums of money which, from time to time, have been allocated for this purpose.
- 29.15** By means of allocation from the "Thanksgiving Fund" and the "Jubilee Fund," and through the benefactions of the late Sir William McArthur, K.C.M.G., special provision is made for the board and education of the daughters of Irish Methodist ministers at the Methodist College and the McArthur Hall, Belfast,



in addition to the allowances for that purpose from the Children's Fund. The sums constituting the endowment for ministers' daughters are held in trust by the Governors of the Methodist College, Belfast.

- 29.16** The annual proceeds of the Funds shall not be distributed in grants to the parents, but shall be applied in part payment of the charges for board and education of the children of our ministers in Wesley College, Dublin, and the Methodist College, Belfast, and be paid to the Treasurers of these Colleges.
- 29.17** Admission to the benefits of the Funds shall be granted, if the income will allow, to all sons and daughters of ministers between such ages as the Governance Board may determine. If the number of applications exceeds the number of vacancies, these shall normally be filled in the following order of priority, subject to due regard being had to the circumstances of each applicant and to the benefits already received from the Fund by the family concerned:
- (a) Children of ministers stationed in the Republic of Ireland, outside Dublin.
  - (b) Children of ministers stationed in Northern Ireland where there is no suitable school within reasonable distance.
  - (c) Children of other ministers.

Within these priorities those not previously benefited by the Funds shall have preference. If there is still an excess of applications, precedence shall be decided by the seniority in the ministry of the father/mother; in a case in which this is equal the child of a deceased father/mother shall have preference over the child of a living one. If both fathers/mothers are living, or both deceased, precedence shall be given to the senior child, or as the Governance Board may decide.

- 29.18** Elections to the benefits of the Ministers' Sons' Fund, Ministers' Daughters' Fund, and Miss Houston's Bequest Fund ([see paragraph 29.25](#)) shall be for one year. An applicant shall be eleven years of age at least on 30th June in the connexional year in which application for admission to the benefit of the Funds is made. Applications for election or re-election to the benefit of the Funds must be sent to the Secretary of the Children's Fund not later than 25th April in any year.

No pupil shall be given the benefit of the Ministers' Sons' Fund, or the Ministers' Daughters' Fund, for more than six years, unless there is a vacancy

in the Foundation concerned, in which case the Governance Board may re-elect for a seventh or subsequent year.

- 29.19** The amount to be paid by the Funds, and the total number of boys and girls admitted to their benefits, shall be determined by the Governance Board from time to time.
- 29.20** The officers of the Children's Fund are authorised to make any necessary adjustments occasioned by stationing, in accordance with the rules.
- 29.21** The sons and daughters of ministers of the Methodist Church in Ireland serving overseas who are being educated in Ireland shall be eligible for the benefits of the Ministers' Sons' and Daughters' Funds on the same conditions as children of ministers in the home work, provided that no payment from the Funds shall be made during the period when such children are in receipt of the education grant from the World Church Office.
- 29.22** The number of boys and girls to be admitted to the benefits of the Funds shall be communicated to the Headmaster of Wesley College and the Headmaster of the Methodist College by the Secretary of the Children's Fund immediately after Conference.
- 29.23** The Secretary of the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland shall report annually to the Governance Board the number of boys and girls who may be who may be admitted to the benefits of the Funds.
- 29.24** The Accounts of the Funds shall be presented annually to the Governance Board.

### Miss Houston's Bequest

- 29.25** Under the will of Miss Mary Houston, in the year 1818, the sum of £1,400 was bequeathed for the benefit of daughters of Irish Methodist ministers. The following are the regulations of the Conference with reference to this Fund:
- (a) The capital of the Fund is vested in the Statutory Trustees.
  - (b) The income of the Fund shall be applied for the benefit of the daughters of ministers of the Irish Conference, subject to the following regulations:
    - (i) The terms of Miss Houston's Will regulate the distribution of the Fund, provided applicants answering the conditions therein prescribed shall present their claims.

- (ii) If no such applicants present themselves, from year to year, or if any surplus remains undisposed of after their claims have been considered and dealt with, it shall be lawful to allocate the annual proceeds, or the surplus as the case may be, to assist ministers' daughters who are boarders at Wesley College, Dublin, with their education after the age of eleven. Should any surplus remain after such claims have been dealt with, it shall be lawful to allocate such surplus to assist ministers' daughters to continue their education at a University or similar institution until the age of twenty-one on 30th June in the year in which the grant is made.
- (c) The officers of the Children's Fund together with the Secretary of the Conference and the Head of Finance shall be the committee for selecting girls to be admitted to the benefits of Miss Houston's bequest.
- (d) The Accounts of the Fund shall be presented annually to the Governance Board.

## CHAPTER 30 - COUNCIL ON SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**30.01** The Council on Social Responsibility is charged with undertaking on behalf of the Connexion, informed study and analysis of social, economic, political and international issues. It shall consider such issues with theological insight and shall seek to do so in a manner which effectively both represents and resources the Church. The Council shall report annually to the Conference and shall also keep the Governance Board appraised of its work.

In connection with any of the issues being addressed, the Council or its Executive Committees are authorised to take action in harmony with existing declarations or resolutions of the Conference, and to communicate regarding these matters with the Governments of each jurisdiction in Ireland.

**30.02** The Council, in undertaking its work, shall have regard to the following principles:

It shall seek to maximise the examination of issues on an all-Ireland basis, with joint activities between the two Executive Committees, and ongoing sharing of information between the Executive Committees.

It shall seek to ensure good communication and flow of information between the Council and other relevant Connexional bodies.

It shall seek to effectively communicate its work to local churches and individuals within the Connexion and shall seek to promote discussion and consideration of relevant issues being considered by the Council throughout all levels of the Church. This may be done through, for example, the use of workshops and seminars, publications, maintaining web pages, regular email communication with interested members of the church and other means as considered appropriate.

It shall ensure that the areas outlined below are treated as matters of particular interest and shall ensure that members of each Executive are designated to be particularly concerned with keeping such matters under review. These areas of special interest which are not exclusive or prevent other areas being addressed are:

- Environmental Issues
- Health and Well-being
- Medical Ethics and Bio-Ethics

- EU and International Affairs
- Political Developments and Parliamentary Business
- Age, Gender and Inter-cultural Issues
- Social Justice and Equality

**30.03** (a) The membership of the Council shall be as follows:

- The President of the Conference
  - The Lay Leader of the Conference
  - The Secretary of the Conference
  - The President Designate of the Conference
  - The Chairpersons of the Northern and Southern Executives
  - The Secretaries of the Northern and Southern Executives
  - The Treasurer
  - Twenty-two other members to be appointed by the Governance Board, twelve of whom shall be resident in Northern Ireland and ten in the Republic of Ireland.
  - Up to six additional persons with relevant expertise, three of whom may be co-opted annually by each Executive, subject to the approval of the Governance Board.
  - Officers of the Council appointed by Conference in the year prior to taking up office.
- (b) The positions of Chairperson and Secretary of each Executive shall be held by a Minister and a Layperson, who will also serve as co-chairpersons and co-secretaries respectively of the Council.
- (c) These officers of the Council (Chairpersons, Secretaries and Treasurer) shall hold office for a term of five years and shall serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. They shall be ex-officio members of the Conference. Nominations for these positions shall normally be made to the Governance Board the year before the planned commencement of their term.
- (d) Members shall be appointed for terms of three years, with a maximum of two consecutive terms. One third of the members shall be appointed each year. Nominations and appointments accompanied by reasoned statements, shall be brought to the Governance Board that ensure that the Council remains

effective and relevant to its current activities, maintains a balance between ministerial and lay members and maintains an equitable representation with respect to age, sex and ethnicity. At least one member in each jurisdiction shall be less than 26 years of age at the time of appointment or be a person currently working with people of that age group.

**30.04** The Council may meet in plenary session at least once in each year, normally in the first quarter of each calendar year, and shall be chaired by the President or another member designated by the President. These meetings shall take place in alternate years in each jurisdiction and shall be hosted by the relevant Executive Committee. A quorum for these meetings shall be one third of the total membership plus one.

At other times, the work of the Council shall be undertaken through two Executive Committees (for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, respectively), which shall be composed of those members and officers of the Council resident in the relevant jurisdiction. The terms of reference of the Executive Committees shall be as determined by the Council.

The Executive committees shall meet as required to undertake their work and generally at least four times in each year. Particular issues may be delegated to working groups for initial consideration, drawn from members of either Executive Committee or from both. The Council, its Executive Committees and duly appointed working groups shall have the power to consult with external persons with relevant expertise. The Council, or its Executive Committees shall also have the power to approve the co-option of such persons on to working groups, where deemed appropriate.

The Officers of the Council shall also meet together in the fourth quarter of the calendar year and at other times as deemed necessary in order to facilitate the business of the Council.

**30.05** A grant shall be made annually from the Comprehensive Assessment towards the expenses of the Council.

**30.06** The President of the Conference or the Governance Board may direct the summoning of the Council, whenever he/she deems it necessary, or shall, on receiving a requisition signed by ten members of the Council, direct that the Council be summoned for the consideration of particular business specified in such a requisition, and for no other business.

## CHAPTER 31 - THE METHODIST CHILD CARE SOCIETY

(Founded in 1870 as the Methodist Orphan Society)

### **Name and Objects**

- 31.01** The name of the Society shall be “The Methodist Child Care Society”.
- 31.02** The objects of the Society shall be to provide financial assistance in the maintenance, welfare and safety of children in need who are connected with the Methodist Church.

### **Management of the Society**

- 31.03** The management of the Society shall be under the Methodist Youth and Children’s Department Executive with the Officers of the Child Care Society being members of the Executive.
- 31.04** A Ministerial Treasurer/Secretary and Lay Treasurer shall be appointed annually by the Governance Board. The Treasurers shall keep the account of the Society in a bank in the name of The Methodist Child Care Society.

### **The Property of the Society**

- 31.05** The property and funds of the Society, and all devises, bequests and donations made and given thereto at any time, shall vest in the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland, who shall be deemed Trustees of the Society's property and funds, and shall hold and dispose of the same as the Officers of the Society and the Executive of I.M.Y.C. may from time to time determine. The receipt of the Treasurers for the time being shall be a good discharge for money or property given or bequeathed to the Society. The Trustees of the Methodist Church in Ireland are empowered by the Methodist Church in Ireland Act, 1915, to accept such devises, bequests and donations, and to deal with them in accordance with the terms of their Statute.

### **Legacies and Donations**

- 31.06** Legacies or donations left to Methodist child care interests in Ireland shall be applicable, in such manner as the Conference may determine, to the Institutions responsible for Methodist child care concerns in Ireland, recognising that legacies or donations specifically made to any one of the Institutions by name must be so applied.

The Officers of the Society shall have power to suggest from time to time the allocation of any legacies or donations for Methodist child care purposes not definitively bequeathed or donated to a particular Institution.

### **Admission to the Benefit of the Society and Payments of Grants**

**31.07** Applications shall be:

- (a) made on the prescribed form, which can be obtained from the Secretary or Lay Treasurer of the Society
- (b) signed by the Superintendent of the Circuit, or a Circuit Minister in Full Connexion.
- (c) forwarded to the Secretary or Lay Treasurer of the Society.

**31.08** The officers of the Society shall have authority to place on the Society's roll such applicants as have been recommended by a Minister in Full Connexion provided that they meet the criteria for financial assistance.

**31.09** Families who are beneficiaries of the Society are expected to maintain a close connection with the congregation through which the grant is paid and the children should be encouraged to be involved in the life of the Methodist Church by attending Sunday School, Youth Organisations and Church services.

**31.10** Grants shall be paid quarterly (March, June, September, December) to the Superintendent of the Circuit or the Minister of the Church to which the beneficiaries belong for distribution to the families concerned as detailed on the payments schedule.

**31.11** In March of each year, a review form shall be completed by the Superintendent or Minister for each family which is receiving benefit from the Society. If the report of the review is not satisfactory the officers of the Society shall have authority to discontinue payment of the grant.

**31.12** A list of the beneficiaries in each Church, with full particulars shall be left by each Superintendent/Minister for her/his successor. If the Superintendent/Minister becomes aware that a family no longer qualifies for financial support from the Society he/she shall inform the Secretary or Lay Treasurer immediately.



**31.13** The amount of the annual grant shall be determined by the Governance Board on the recommendation of the Officers. The Society may award special payments for school clothing and sports outfits as funds permit, to children on the roll.

**31.14** The continuance of grants from the Society shall be dependent upon the rules of the Society being observed; and guardians of children receiving grants shall comply with such rules and directions as shall from time to time be prescribed by the Officers and sanctioned by the Governance Board.

**31.15** Claims upon the funds of the Society shall cease:

(a) when the child

(i) becomes a wage-earner.

(ii) attains 18 years of age unless he/she is going into third-level education.

(b) when the parent/s or guardian/s, in the opinion of the Officers, fails to meet the criteria, as laid out in the rules for the payment of grants.

The Superintendent/Minister shall notify the Secretary or Lay Treasurer of any such changes.

**31.16** Ministers having beneficiaries under their care shall withhold and return to the Treasurers the quarterly grant in any case in which the rules of the Society have not been observed.

**31.17** A public collection or allocation for the funds of the Society shall be made annually in every Church.

### **Twentieth Century Fund Foundationers**

**31.18** The sum of £925 was allocated from the Twentieth Century Fund for the benefit of "Twentieth Century Fund Foundationers" in the Methodist Female Orphan School. This sum has been placed in the custody of the Statutory Trustees, and Conference directs that the income derived from it shall be paid annually to the Governing Body of the Methodist Orphan Education Fund (formerly the Methodist Female Orphan School).

## CHAPTER 32 - EASTWELL RESIDENTIAL HOME

### Methodist Widows' Home

- 32.01** In the year 1766 a Home was founded in Whitefriar Street, Dublin, by the Rev. John Wesley "for reduced widows and aged females". It was known as the Methodist Widows' Alms House and Aged Female Charity, commonly known as the Methodist Widows' Home. For many years the Home was situated in Grantham Street, Dublin, but it is now at "Eastwell", Palmerston Park, Dublin.
- 32.02** Regulations for the administration of the Institution and the charitable funds connected with it are set forth in a Schedule to the Deed of Declaration of Trust, and were approved by the Conference, 1926. Certain changes were decided by the Conference, 1973. The following are the present regulations for the appointment of the Governing Body and the administration of the Home:
- (a) The administration of the Charity shall be undertaken by a Governing Body constituted as follows:
    - (i) The Chair, the Secretary and the Treasurer of the Governing Body who shall be appointed annually by the Governors at their meeting in April.
    - (ii) Two persons to be appointed annually by the Governance Board.
    - (iii) One Governor from each of the Societies in the Dublin area.
    - (iv) Governors, not more than four in number, to be elected by the Annual General Meeting of the Charity.
    - (v) The Chairperson of the Ladies' Committee.
  - (b) The Treasurer of the Governing Body shall receive and disburse moneys and contributions belonging to the Charity in such manner as the Governing Body may from time to time determine, and his/her receipt shall be sufficient discharge for all moneys and contributions received for or on behalf of the Charity.
  - (c) The Governing Body shall:
    - (i) appoint a committee of ladies to assist it and such other committees as it considers necessary.
    - (ii) shall be responsible for the admissions, and all other matters relating to the residents of the Home.

(iii) shall meet in April and at least on one other occasion each year.

(iv) shall report annually to the Governance Board.

## CHAPTER 33 - THE CHURCH'S MINISTRY OF HEALING

**33.01** The Governance Board shall annually appoint a Committee on the Church's Ministry of Healing.

**33.02** The aims of the Committee shall be:

- (a) to explore and study further the Church's involvement in the ministry of healing,
- (b) to encourage the sharing of insights and experiences and facilitate the exercise of this ministry at circuit and society levels,
- (c) to report annually to the Governance Board.

**33.03** The Committee shall consist of:

- The President of the Conference
- The Lay Leader of the Conference
- The Secretary of the Conference
- The Chair of the Committee
- The Secretary of the Committee
- Six other members of whom not more than two shall be ministers

The Ex-President and President Designate of the Conference and the Lay Leader of the Conference shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Committee.

**33.04** The Chair and Secretary shall be appointed by the Governance Board and shall hold office for a period of four years. Members of the Committee shall be appointed by the Governance Board for a period of three years and shall be eligible for reappointment.

## CHAPTER 34 - PRISON AND HEALTHCARE COMMITTEE

- 34.01** The Governance Board shall appoint a Prison and Healthcare Chaplaincy Committee, which shall report through the Connexional Team.
- 34.02** The Mission of the Committee shall be ‘to support and promote Christian chaplaincy ministries of healing, care and restoration among vulnerable people’.
- 34.03** The Committee shall consist of a maximum of ten members including the officers.
- 34.04** Membership of the Committee shall reflect the number and diversity of chaplaincies throughout Ireland with no less than two representatives from either Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland; no less than two representatives from either hospital or prison ministries; and no less than two laypersons or ministers.
- 34.05** The officers shall be a Chairperson and a Convenor/Secretary. Each may serve for a period of three years with the possibility of a second period of up to three years. After this second period the Chairperson and Convenor/Secretary may remain as members of the Committee but shall be ineligible for office for a minimum of one year.

## CHAPTER 35 - THE COMMITTEE FOR INTERCHURCH RELATIONS

- 35.01** The Governance Board shall appoint a Committee for Inter-Church Relations which shall report annually to the Conference.
- 35.02** The Committee shall address those issues which concern relationships with other Churches within Ireland and keep the Church informed concerning Inter-Church issues at a national (Britain and Ireland), European and world level.
- 35.03** (a) The Committee shall consist of not more than ten members, including the Secretary of the Conference, the Convenor for Inter-Church Relations, a representative from the Faith and Order Committee, a representative of the Covenant Council and up to six other members.
- (b) The Governance Board shall appoint a Chair of the Committee from among the membership.
- (c) The Convenor for Inter-Church Relations shall be the Secretary of the Committee.
- (d) The Committee shall have power to co-opt such persons to assist with particular areas of work.

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