

**The Governance Board
Meeting 012: 10th November 2022 via Zoom
MINUTES**

Present:		Apologies
Mr Tony O'Connor (Chair)	Rev Harold Agnew	Rev Nigel Mackey
General Secretary: Rev Dr Heather Morris (Convener)	Mr David Best	
Rev David Nixon	Rev David Campton	
Mr Tom Wilson	Mr John Clarke	
Rev Dr Sahr Yambasu	Mr Paul Cummings	
Rev David Turtle	Ms Laura Griffith	
Mr Tom Millar	Ms Gillian Kingston	

In attendance: Ms Elaine Barnett & Ms Clíodhna Smyth (Secretaries to the Board)
In attendance via Zoom to present particular items of business: Ms Nicola Robinson (Head of Finance) – Item 9 (Finance report / 2021 Year end accounts)

1. Opening Prayers

Rev David Turtle read from Psalm 106 and led the meeting in prayer.

2. Welcome and Apologies

All were welcomed to the meeting, especially Clíodhna Smyth attending for the first time as Secretary to the Board; apologies were noted.

3. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The Minutes were agreed, and there were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.

4. Conflicts of Interest

D Campton (Item 9 Finance report, City Missions) H Agnew and D Best, Lurgan Circuit (item 13, Property Board Interest Rate)

5. Past Decisions – Implementation

(012_22.11 GB Decisions Implementation Review as previously circulated)

Progress was discussed on the projects within this document, and it was agreed to be a helpful way to monitor progress. T O'Connor to keep it updated.

6. President's Advisory Committee

There was no report, as it has not met since the last Governance Board meeting.

7. General Secretary's Report

Dr Morris reported:

- The Connexional Team has set up a small group to look at the issue of growth and are tasked with developing a plan/strategy for a 5 year period. The small group consists of people on the ground, Pioneer mission leaders and young people. Reporting to the Connexional Team is due at the end of the first quarter 2023.
- Cost of living crisis – CSR and Estates team – the Governance Board acknowledges work already done and that which is continuing to be done by Societies. Some churches are looking to open for longer hours in order to serve local communities and the Methodist Church in Ireland is willing to support these initiatives. The Estates team is looking at green energy sources which may help Societies in their efforts.

- The Church Leaders Group met the Secretary of State for NI and there is a planned meeting with the President of Ireland. It is important for the Methodist Church in Ireland to be a voice for reconciliation.
- Recordkeeping – There are multiple places within the Methodist Church in Ireland in which records have been kept in the past, and it is proposed that the new HR system/TUPE will help to integrate and consolidate these records. HM is actively working on this.
- The Methodist Church in Ireland has produced a study guide on Israel/Palestine called “The (un)Holy Land”. Correspondence has been received and replies have been sent.

8. Administrative Items

- 1) Education – Carbury school full report due Nov/Dec 2022.
- 2) Edgehill Theological College was previously a separate charity to that of MCI. The two have now been incorporated and HM expressed thanks especially to David Best, David Campton who have worked very hard on this long and complicated process. Final date of transition is possibly end of November, subject to legal confirmation.
- 3) DCM DAC is a company limited by shares. There is one share which is owned by MCI. One member of the Governance Board to attend the Annual meeting and sign off on the accounts as a representative of MCI. David Best to attend on 23rd November at 8pm on Zoom.

4) **Ulster Bank accounts** – Clontarf Methodist to move their bank account from Ulster Bank to AIB.

Approved

9. Finance

Tony O’Connor welcomed Nicola Robinson to the meeting and expressed the appreciation of the Board for all the work that she and the Finance team were doing. Ms Robinson gave an update on the report (*012_22.11_09 Finance Report, previously circulated*), highlighting the following:

a) Audited Accounts

Should be available to sign off by the end of November. Audit Committee to examine the accounts and then NR to present them along with explanation of variations to the Governance Board for approval by end of November as indicated to CCNI. Short meeting by Zoom to be arranged for this purpose.

b) Budget Process

NR confirmed that the Finance department is on track to complete the schedule as outlined at previous meeting. From early 2023 quarterly reports for Connexional Funds & Departments should be available for the Governance Board, and the 2022 Consolidated Accounts are scheduled for Audit in April 2023.

c) Closure of Ulster Bank accounts

Deadline is 6th December – N Robinson to bring a backup plan to the meeting at the end of November when the accounts are being signed off.

10. Policy Review

Fraud Policy – The revised version is complete with the exception of some minor wording changes.

Health & Safety – It was acknowledged that this was an area which can be very complex and lengthy. It was decided to develop a comprehensive but summary template that societies can easily follow. There are existing Health & Safety policies in different departments within the Methodist Church in Ireland. It was suggested to contact the Methodist Insurance company and IMYC as they have some policies already in use, which could be used as a template.

Action H Morris

11. Faith & Order Committee update

Gillian Kingston outlined the ongoing work in this area. The Faith & Order Committee have produced a Bible study on the theme of Unity to be distributed shortly. A roadshow across the Connexion is proposed for members to engage with the issue.

12. HR Report

Work is ongoing comparing different models and will be reported upon in due course.

13. Property related Items

012_22.11_13 Property Board Interest Rate as previously circulated

The key sentence of the report was identified as being that there is a joint goal of providing affordable funding sources while maintaining the real value of funds for future generations.

Proposal – That the Property Board set the rates of the loans, that the loans set are to remain for the entire duration of the Loan, and that interest rates are to be reviewed annually. Any resulting losses due to interest rate fluctuations are to be borne by the Property fund.

Agreed

14. Any Other Business

Tony expressed thanks on behalf of the Board to Elaine Barnett for all her work as she steps down from her role as Secretary to the Board.

15. Next Meeting: 8th December, Zoom

16. Closing prayer

T O'Connor expressed his thanks to the members of the Board and, there being no other business, he invited Rev David Turtle to close the meeting with prayer.

Tony O'Connor
8th December 2022