

Methodist Council, January Meeting Brief Report to the March Circuit Meeting

Methodist Council met for its January meeting at Hothorpe Hall near Market Harborough. Out of a vast agenda the following items are worth noting.

Methodist Church House

Building work has been going on at Church House for months, not helped by the contractor going into administration in December. There is a plea to us all that when dealing with members of the Connexional Team based in London, be aware of the stresses they are working with.

Grants

There are certain areas of Connexional underspend, and one of these areas is property grants. I simply flag this up to hold in mind when we come to property schemes that might qualify for Connexional support. It's worth applying!

Floods in Cumbria

Thanks were expressed by the Cumbria District for the support and response received from the wider church after the recent flooding.

Camden Methodist Church

Council was asked to support a very innovative scheme to transform a building that in looks is similar to Waterloo Road and is falling down. A long lease will be granted to MIC Ltd (the company that runs 'The Wesley' hotel, used to be 'Methodist International Centre'), creation of a hotel with space in the basement for a worship area and other community rooms. Cost of scheme £5m. Robust business case. Local congregation will have rent-free use of the worship space. Strong connexional support. You can read the report here (flick through to the end for photos / drawings / artist's impressions of the finished building): <http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1937988/coun-MC16-10-Development-of-Camden-Methodist-Church-january-2016.pdf>

Food for thought!

Wrestling with decline

Ongoing issue of wrestling with the decline of the Methodist Church and how we respond. Particularly where do we focus resources?

Island appointments

The Connexional Allowances Committee brought a report that included recommendations about the stipend of ministers serving on the Islands (Channel, Shetland, Scilly and Mann). Council recommends to Conference a 16% addition to stipend to be paid to ministers from the Connexion's General Fund from 1st September 2017 (or possibly 2016 if current budget allows). The recommendation was going to be 15% but the Committee realised that the Channel Islands have been paying 16% out of their own funds for years.

The allowance is in recognition of the costs of island living and seeking to put principles of Connexionalism into practice: i.e. ministers serving in certain parts of the connexion should not be disadvantaged by being willing to serve in those places. Further work to be done examining other island issues that might have an impact both on finances and stationing.

Ten Holy Habits

Finally, I picked up on the Birmingham Circuit's programme called '10 Holy Habits' - a programme focussing on developing discipleship based on Acts 2. This is being rolled out across the Birmingham circuit over a 3 year period. I note that our own 2020 report included a resolution that affirmed the need to focus on discipleship: we passed the resolution but it seems to have got lost in the proverbial long grass! Might this be something worth looking at? <https://www.birminghammethodistcircuit.org.uk/holy-habits/>

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