

**Please note that these minutes are, as yet, unapproved**

**The Methodist Church in Wales  
Synod Policy Committee**

Minutes of the meeting held at Newtown Methodist Church  
Saturday 19 June 2010

**Present:** Rev Stephen Wigley Chair  
John Atkinson, Margaret Chapman, Pam Cram, Bob Farrimond, Peter Holwell, Graham Illingworth, Andrew Mathieson, Verity Phillips, Sandra Powell, Trevor Pratt, Barry Smith, Gordon Sollis, Ann Thomas, Roy Watson, Alf Williams, Frances Williams, Linda Woollacott  
Ann Cashmore Minute Secretary

**Opening devotions** were led by Stephen Wigley and based on the lectionary readings for 20 June.

**Welcome:** The Chair welcomed Andrew Mathieson from Welshpool & Bro Hafren Circuit to the meeting.

**13/10 Apologies:** Pauline Barnett, David Easton, Brian Ham, Alan Jenkins, Martin Lougher, Richard Sharples

**14/10 Minutes**

The following amendments were agreed:

Paragraph 8/10 "Caldicott" to Caldicot

Paragraph 9/10 item (iii) to (ii), (iv) to (iii) and (v) to (iv)

Paragraph 10/10 "Irfan" to "Irfon"

With these amendments the minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

**15/10 Matters to be discussed not covered by Agenda items**

John Atkinson - visit of Zimbabwean choir 2011  
Trevor Pratt - Church Stoke chapel  
Gordon Sollis - Pembroke Dock and Milford Haven chapels

**16/10 Matters arising from previous minutes**

**(a) Synod Local Preachers' Secretary and Tutors**

The Chair confirmed that the following had been appointed - Peter Swindale of Neath Port Talbot Circuit as Local Preachers' Secretary, Dorothy Cresswell of Gwent Hills & Vales Circuit as Tutor (Faith & Worship) and Chris Price of Aberystwyth Circuit as Tutor (Development).

**(b) Authorisation to Serve**

The Chair confirmed that the name of the Rev. Irfon James will be presented to Conference so he can be approved as Authorised to Serve as a Minister in the Methodist Church.

**17/10 Establishing Synod Policy**

**(a) Local preachers on trial and extensions: A Policy for Wales Synod**

Trevor Pratt presented a resolution based on the paper presented to the February meeting. Trevor pointed out that after 5 years if a LP in training had not completed the course an application for extension needed to be made, initially to the local LP meeting. If this meeting decided not give an extension, the LP in training had the right to address the Synod Policy Committee, which would involve people travelling to the meeting for 5 or 10 minutes only. In order to avoid this unnecessary travel the SPC was asked to agree the implementation of a method of local settlement whereby a panel would be appointed to review the situation. The resolution provided a structure for the setting up of this panel as and when necessary.

**SPC AGREED** to the resolution, with two slight amendments, and Linda Woollacott would inform the relevant Local Preachers' secretaries in each Circuit. This would be further discussed at the Superintendents' Consultation in November.

**(b) Membership of SPC – length of appointment**

Graham Illingworth outlined the agreed policy that members of SPC should be of a mix of lay, ordained and gender. Appointments are made annually by Circuit meetings, with a request that members be prepared to serve for up to three years to ensure continuity. The meeting would keep under review the membership balance

Trevor Pratt pointed out that the volunteer minute secretary was appointed by their own Circuit as a full representative. When another person would become Circuit representative, would the minute secretary become non-voting?

**SPC AGREED** that the Synod Leadership Team consider this.

**18/10 Implementation of Synod Policy**

**(a) Finance**

**(i) Circuit and Church Standard Forms of Accounts**

A list, prepared by Jack Healey, of those churches/circuits where the Standard form of Accounts for the year ended 31 August, 2009 have not been submitted to the Synod was read. It was outlined that Synod now held no further responsibility for these omissions. The SPC recognised and understood the reasons for all the late provision of accounts

**SPC AGREED** that the Chair and Assistant Synod Secretary could sign the form and forward to Connexion.

**(b) Property**

The Chair reported on the extensive discussion which had taken place at the Stewards and Superintendents meeting regarding the Property Office in Manchester. It was confirmed the matter would be debated at Conference.

Peter Holwell asked the meeting to note that at present, once a signature is obtained on a Consents form for a property scheme within a circuit, the church concerned can draw the money without informing the circuit or the circuit receiving any other notification. The matter was due for alteration, but circuits should be aware of this situation.

Reinstatement schemes, where one property is being sold to fund the purchase or refurbishment of another equivalent property, are being closely monitored at Connexional level.

**(c) Manses**

Graham Illingworth gave a résumé of Mary Williams' report stating that the remaining manses would be inspected during the period September to December 2010, with notification going to manses in August. After the final inspection, every manse will have been inspected and a rolling programme would be maintained for the future.

The meeting expressed its thanks to Mary for her hard work in obtaining inspections for all the Synod's manses.

**(d) Quinquennial inspections**

Mary was pleased that she had received several reports and the meeting was reminded that one copy should go to Mary and one copy to Jack Healey.

**(e) Other matters**

Letters of support for campaigns and other organisations

**SPC AGREED** that the Chair would bring such requests for support to the SPC and to the SLT if the time scale was too short.

**19/10 SPC business**

**(a) Appointments**

The recommendation to Synod in September would be that all Synod Officers and some other posts would be re-appointed.

The following year some new appointments would need to be made including the treasurer and lay stationing representative.

**(b) Diary**

A list of dates had been distributed to the meeting.

The Candidates Committee, scheduled for February 2011, would now meet over two days, 17 and 18 February, because there was the possibility of 6 candidates and the process would take more than one day. Venues for the committee would be within reasonable distance of the candidates' circuits.

The **2012** Synod would be held on Saturday 3 September.

**(c) Church Stoke:** Trevor reported that the final service at this chapel in England, part of Welshpool & Bro Hafren Circuit, had taken place on 29 May. The chapel was next to the local Anglican church with whom they had good relations.

**SPC ACCEPTED** the closure.

**Pembroke Dock:** Gordon stated that Trinity united URC/Methodist chapel had decided to close. Alan Jenkins had prepared a detailed explanation of what had happened and the outcome of many discussions. The building was wholly owned by the URC and there was a Methodist church nearby for those members who wished to go there. The recommendation to close had come from the circuit meeting and a meeting of the URC elders and the SPC's approval was sought.

**SPC APPROVED.**

**Milford Haven:** Gordon also reported that a Methodist/URC declaration of intent to share was due to be signed at a service on Monday 12 July 2010 and from September a new minister, Hugh John Wilson, would take up his appointment. . Gordon Sollis confirmed that all the necessary details were in place.

**SPC APPROVED**

The meeting paused here to reflect on these churches and the future of the members.

**20/10 Chair's business**

**(a) Vetting and barring**

The Chair brought to the attention of the meeting a letter sent to all Superintendents from Pearl Luxon and confirmed that CRB checks would continue on the new forms. Government changes would have to be taken into account when they became known.

**(b) Memorial**

A Synod memorial had been submitted requesting clarification of details regarding Connexional procedures where an ordained person is disciplined or convicted of offences to do with children.

The Chair reported that he had received the proposed response from Connexion, but this included it within a wider review, which would go to Methodist Council for further consideration and report to Conference in 2011. There was some concern expressed that this response did not address the current situation with appropriate urgency.

There was also a memorial from Wrexham circuit seeking clarification of the procedures for older candidates offering for ministry.

## **21/10 Matters to and from related bodies**

### **(a) Methodist Council**

Graham Illingworth reported the following, all of which will be presented to Conference for final decision:

The Budget for 2010/11 – Modifications (or otherwise) to the Ministers Pension Fund – the plans for the future location of the present Manchester Resourcing Mission office – the future of Wesley College, Bristol – Safeguarding, both Children and vulnerable Adults and the impact of recent Government changes – the introduction of an additional authorised hymn book (Singing the Faith)

### **(b) Youth Participation Strategy**

The distributed paper by Luke Curran was presented by the Chair. As part of the revised Connexional budget proposals, the budget for the YP Strategy had been cut and no Connexional funds were available for Wales. It was proposed that and the Synod should support a gap year youth worker for 15 hours/week for three years, with a different person annually.

Concern was expressed that the 15 hours would not be enough when the whole of Wales was being covered. Trevor Pratt reassured the meeting that specific areas would be targeted each year and that the Synod did not expect a “whole Wales” approach. Matt Hassman’s work had highlighted areas of youth work and interest from young people in participating in the life of the church and this would be used as a basis for further development.

**SPC AGREED** to the proposal with 2 abstentions.

### **(c) Bible Fresh Initiative**

2011 was the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the King James Bible and there was an ecumenical drive to encourage Bible reading throughout the country. Wales’ geography being a problem for a whole Synod event, the meeting **AGREED** that circuit events would be held to celebrate. Various suggestions were put forward such as a same time, same day, same activity; obtaining published ideas for general use and local initiative. Wales Training Network would be involved and a co-ordinator for the Synod was required. The Chair would inform the organisers of the SPC’s decision and asked the meeting to think of a suitable person to act as co-ordinator.

### **(d) Y Cyngor**

Synod Cymru new model was working well and retiring Presbyterian ministers were being encouraged to preach in the Welsh language. A website and a language policy were in place. It has been confirmed that a Connexional member will attend Y Cyngor on a regular basis.

## **22/10 Ecumenical matters**

### **(a) Proposals for Commission of Covenanted Churches**

The meeting was reminded that at the February meeting there had been some discussion regarding the future of the Covenant after 2011. The Commission had now proposed that it continues its work for a further period of 5 years accompanied by an agenda it proposed to follow. This proposal had to be discussed at Y Cyngor, which has the responsibility for co-ordinating ecumenical work across the two Synods. Y Cyngor was happy to support the continuation of the commission but not with the agenda as presented and wished to make some further suggestions following its meeting in November 2010. Accordingly the proposal as it now stood (ie that the Commission continues its work for a further 5 years) was recommended to Synod by Y Cyngor, on the basis that Y Cyngor would reply to the Commission following the responses of both Synods, and that this response would include suggestions from Y Cyngor about the future agenda. Gordon Sollis stated that all Covenanted members had to realise the changes of the past 30 years but that the goal remains the same whilst the time-frame is unknown. In some locations there was a lot of co-operation between Covenanted churches and in other places there was none and this situation had to be recognised.

**SPC AGREED** the recommendation from Y Cyngor.

**(b) Proposals for national sponsoring body**

The Chair reported that while this had been agreed at Council in April 2008, it had not yet met. A date had now been proposed for September 2010 but at present, no firm date and venue had been decided. In the meantime, we continue to press for the urgent clarification and action on Methodist funding of the ecumenical instruments, especially with Cytun.

**(c) Ecumenical reference group and funding of ecumenical instruments**

This had first been discussed ecumenically in 2008 and dates had been proposed for September. At present, no firm date and venue had been decided upon.

**23/10 Mission and Social Issues**

**(a) Item from paragraph 15/10**

John Atkinson - visit of Zimbabwean ladies choir, October 2011

John asked if Synod member circuits would be willing to host the choir for a concert in their area. Various members acknowledged their interest. John confirmed his willingness to co-ordinate the visit, but needed information as soon as possible from Circuits interested.

**Action: All Members**

John also reported on a one day conference in October entitled "Is Religion Good for You".

Roy Watson sadly reported that his visit to Syria with Christian Aid had been cancelled due to the activities of an Icelandic volcano. He would be representing the Methodist Church on a forthcoming Christian Aid committee.

**(b) Other items**

The meeting was reminded that substitutes were to be encouraged to attend when the designated representative was unable to be present at SPC meetings.

Andrew Mathieson reminded the meeting that the Heritage Booklet was available and would be distributed at Conference. A leaflet about a meeting at Llanidloes on 25 September was available for all churches.

This was the last SPC meeting for Bob Farrimond, Barry Smith and Frances Williams and the Chair thanked them for their contributions during the years and wished them well for the future.

**24/10 Date of next meeting**

Saturday 23 October at Newtown Methodist Church, 10.00 for 10.30.

The meeting confirmed the next meetings as:

Saturday 26 February and Saturday 18 June 2011