

The Methodist Church in Wales Synod Policy committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Newtown Methodist church
Saturday 15 October 2011

Present: Rev Stephen Wigley Chair
John Atkinson, Margaret Chapman, Richard Gillion, Chris Gray, Jack Healey, Richard Hodgson, David Hutton, Alan Jenkins, Graham Illingworth, Andrew Mathieson, Verity Phillips, Sandra Powell, Trevor Pratt, Richard Sharples, Ann Thomas, Alf Williams
Ann Cashmore Minute Secretary

The Chair welcomed new members to the meeting - Chris Gray from Neath Port Talbot Circuit and Richard Hodgson, the new Treasurer.

Opening devotions were led by SDW including prayers for those recently bereaved. Stephen thanked members for attending.

29/11 Apologies: Pauline Barnett, David Easton, Peter Holwell, Martin Lougher, Gordon Sollis, Roy Watson, John Wiseman

SDW reminded the meeting that if a circuit representative was not able to attend, it would be helpful if a non voting substitute attended. This would ensure circuit voices were heard at SPC and information could flow from and to circuits.

30/11 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 18 June 2011, with "Dobson" changed to "Hodgson", were agreed as true and correct and signed by the Chair.

31/11 Matters Arising

Standard Form of Accounts – outstanding Circuits to be encouraged to complete.

Memorials feedback – feedback on memorials is fed via Synod.

Where a circuit/church presented a specific memorial, feed back goes direct to the presenting body

Web site and Y Wag – the meeting to look at up-grading the site had been held; the finance to develop the site is in place and principal agreed. Part of the Synod website is being made available as a youth section.

Visit of Zambian Choir – JA reported that all the concerts throughout the Synod had been well received and local hosts had been excellent. Travel costs were less than anticipated and the visit was within budget. It is unlikely that Synod finances would be required, but JA will confirm with treasurer once final 'visit' accounts completed. Through links with Rev Prof Teddy Kalongo, a group of young people and staff from the Amelia Trust Farm would be visiting Zambia.

LEP Barry Road – This had been approved by SPC in principal; the Circuit meeting had agreed the venture and the documents were completed.

32/11 Establishing Synod Policy

Higher Education Chaplaincy

AW sought clarification of the criteria for grants towards the chaplaincy at Bangor University. Other establishments receive funding from Trust 14508, but Bangor does not. AW reminded the Circuit could apply to the Schemes & Grants Committee for financial support, but the Circuit was responsible for the chaplaincy.

RS reported that chaplaincy at Glyndwr University, Wrexham is now supported by Wales Synod and it is hoped other churches would also provide financial support.

33/11 Implementing Synod Policy

(i) General

(a) Finance – papers distributed with agenda

RH summarised the accounts for year 2010/11. The large grant balances are required to ensure money is available for the number of years a grant has been approved. The Accounts were ACCEPTED. The Reserves Policy was ACCEPTED. The meeting AGREED that the Chair could sign the Standard Form of Accounts. The Budget would be presented at the February meeting. At this stage, it is anticipated that the connexional assessment will increase by approximately 2.3%.

It was agreed SLT would review the ongoing nature of the Ellen Turney Trust.

(b) Chair's Nominations Committee

TP distributed papers at the meeting for dissemination throughout Circuits by representatives. The consultation period runs to the end of November 2012 - completed papers to be returned to TP no later than then. A recommendation will be brought to the February meeting.

The model of Assistant Chairs is due to be reviewed. This will take place in December 2011/January 2012. A report on the consultation will be presented to the February meeting recommending a way forward for the long term. Subject to the outcome, possible extensions and renewal of appointments of the Assistant Chairs would be undertaken. A final report for implementation would come to the June 2012 SPC.

In answer to a question added work load, TP stated that the Chair, the two Assistant Chairs and lay members of SLT were taking short term additional tasks. SLT were ensuring that SDW's workload was well managed.

(c) Y Wag (Synod Youth Work Action Group) RS reported the following:

1. The Youth Forum run in parallel with Synod was a great success; the young people really enjoyed themselves and it is anticipated this will be an annual event when young people can meet together and with Synod. There are approximately 25 people interested in attending the Youth Assembly and churches and Circuits are encouraged to support their young people financially; Synod had agreed to provide £500 towards costs.

2. A sleep-over had been organised for February 2012 half-term. Further information will be distributed in due course.

3. Ian Thomas, a full-time youth worker in the Cardiff Circuit, has been working with YWAG in the absence of a Youth Enabler. This informal arrangement needs reviewing – SLT to consider.

4. The overall brief is for "youth", i.e. 11-18 age range; SLT to look at a policy for children's work.

5. "One Programme" participants had been used; Cardiff placement was in the second year. Wrexham YP experience exchange run by the Connexion with USPG was a 6 month exchange within World Church.

The Chair thanked RS for his report.

(d) Election of Deacons to Conference

AW encouraged Circuits to nominate deacons for election as a representative to Conference and Synod select as with other categories rather than continue with the present model of the deacons selecting one of their number.

(e) Mobile Tabernacle for North Wales

AW requested a second mobile tabernacle be made available in the north of the Synod. It was agreed a way forward was for a bid indicating use and costing be prepared and an application for funding be made to the Schemes & Grants Committee for consideration.

(f) Purpose of Synod

VP presented a report from the Mid-Glamorgan Mission Circuit Leadership Team, the main thrust of which was:

"The MGM leadership team wonder whether there may be value in holding two representative sessions of Synod each year despite the distances involved so that:

- (a) subjects can be covered in greater depth
- (b) responses to the Connexion can be more widely and prayerfully considered
- (c) those who have particular interests can explore them with like-minded people
- (d) a sense of belonging can develop through the building of relationships beyond circuit or local boundaries” etc.

After some discussion, the Chair suggested that this could provide a discussion paper for a future SPC meeting and the meeting AGREED that this should happen.

(ii) Property

The unoccupied synod manse in Cardiff, recently used as the synod office, may be needed as accommodation in the future. It was agreed not to sell the property but to seek an appropriate let through a suitable agency.

A Property Advisers Forum organised by the Church in Wales will be held on 18/19 October in Dolgellau and 24/25 October in Menai Bridge. Rev Rosemarie Clarke will attend one session as Synod rep.

Page 8 of Schedule A contained an energy analysis; it is important Circuits complete this section.

(iii) Trust 14508 Advisory Committee

The outstanding accounts would be submitted to the SPC.

(iv) Manses Committee

All circuit manses have been inspected and copies of reports are sent to superintendents.

34/11 SPC Business

(a) Closures

Harcourt Terrace (Gwent Hills & Vales Circuit) has amalgamated with Vale Terrace and future the in church would be known as Tredegar Methodist Church. Formal permission to close Harcourt Terr. Was granted.

Holyhead congregation (Bangor and Holyhead Circuit) are moving to share with the Church in Wales on the closure of the Welsh chapel, which they had previously shared.

Pembroke Dock church in the Pembrokeshire Circuit, where approval for closure had been agreed has now closed. The congregation will be worshipping in Milford Haven in the URC/Methodist church, which will now be known as Christ Church.

(b) Application for Local Preacher on trial extension

Final units had been submitted by two Local Preachers in the Buckley & Deeside Circuit but Connexional LP office had requested that an application for extension be received before marking could commence. The meeting AGREED the extension to August 2012.

(c) Probationer Application

Appointments had been agreed for Cardiff, Gwent Hills & Vales, and Neath Port Talbot . All appointments will be seeking Lay Authorisation. The meeting AGREED to these applications.

(e) Sabbaticals

Dorothy Creswell has agreed to be the Synod Sabbaticals' Officer with immediate effect.

Sabbatical requests for 2011 had been received from:

Deacon Margaret Crompton –to explore diaconal ministry within a team ministry context
 Rev Martin Freeman – will visit UK Cathedrals and record reflections. The meeting AGREED to these requests.

(e) Cytun

In his absence, SP submitted RW's report.

“Cytun International Forum

I attended the meeting of the above Forum on 15 September, meeting at the Church in Wales offices, Cathedral Road, Cardiff. Our Chair, Rev Chris Gillham, gave a comprehensive account of his visit in the summer to the Lebanon and was able to report a remarkable transformation in the country since the visit of the Forum in 2006. Since Hezbollah now have places in the coalition government, Lebanon has become an oasis

of calm in the Middle East. Tourism is booming and the economy improving. Chris was able to meet up with Christian leaders in the country and assure them of the prayerful support of Welsh Christians.

In the meeting we also talked of a return visit by Syrian Christian leaders. The Forum had visited Syria in 2006 and it would be good to retain links with the Christian community in Syria. Chris would look into the prospect of the Welsh Churches hosting a visit from a Syrian delegation.

Christian Aid National Committee for Wales

I was able to attend this meeting of Christian Aid on 6 October. It was chaired by our new Chair, the Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, John Davies. Once again, it was reported that the income for Christian Aid in the British Isles last year topped the £100 million pound mark.

Eirion Samuel, responsible for Christian Aid's work in the schools in Wales, highlighted the resources which Christian Aid can provide for teaching RE in schools particularly for GCSE work. Also materials for Sunday School work are readily available - contact Eirion Samuel at Christian Aid, Station Road, Radyr, Cardiff."

35/11 Chair's Business

Stationing

A busy year in regard to invitations due, leading to 4 appointments needed through stationing and 3 probationer appointments. In August 2012, 5 Presbyters and 1 Deacon are moving. At the initial stage of stationing there were 167 vacancies and 125 presbyters available. The diaconate had more people available than there were vacancies. Circuits were encouraged to consider deacons for future vacancies. The first round of next year's matching would be from 7 to 11 November.

The 6 ministers moving are:

Rev Mike Long; Rev Chris Pritchard; Deacon Liz Rowe and Rev John Rowe;
Rev Soba Sinnathamby; Rev Ian Waugh and Rev Derek Rigby retires

7 Appointments are needed:

2 superintendents – Llanelli & Carmarthen and MGM

2 presbyters – Conwy & Prestatyn

3 probationers – as detailed in 34/11 (c) above.

TP plans to end his role as Synod Secretary in August 2012. Rev Rosemarie Clarke had been nominated by SLT to become Synod Secretary. The meeting AGREED this appointment. SDW indicated there would be other opportunities to express our thanks.

36/11 Matters to and from related bodies

(i) Methodist Council

GI reported:

1. Statement regarding Rev Steven Plant being ordained into the Church of England; the situation is under review and a formal statement will be issued.
2. Civil Partnerships in religious premises – Conference confirmed that Methodist premises should not be used for these ceremonies.
3. Strategy and Resource committee – Peter Howdle is to be the new chair. The high turnover of staff in the Central Finance Dept. continues to be a concern
4. General Secretary's Conference Report was discussed
5. Resourcing Mission Office up-date; All staff have been consulted - 5 leave at the end of October; 3 at the end of December; 2 are retiring; 2 will continue to work into 2012. One person has been deployed to TMCP and one person has a job match interview pending. All roles not filled internally will be advertised externally. The work of the RMO will formally transfer to London at the end of December and the term RMO will cease to be used from January 2012.

6. Pensions –Auto enrolment - From 2013, all staff with Methodist Church Contracts will be required to register and will be enrolled into the pension scheme. This will affect ALL staff including those employed in circuits and churches. Further information will be forthcoming in the New Year when details will become clearer, but the indications are that there will be additional costs to the employer in relation to pension costs

7. “Fruitful Fields” – A detailed consultation paper prepared by the Ministries Committee will be published on 17th October outlining radical proposals for change in the way the church organises learning and development. It will be available on the web and paper copies are available from connexional office, London. It is anticipated there will be direct effects on training models and all training establishments could well be affected. An email will be distributed to all SPC members and superintendents informing them of the web page. The consultation period runs to 23rd December 2012. A report will be presented to Conference 2012 outlining the proposed way forward. Wales Training Forum will consider the paper as will all training staff in Wales. The next SLT/superintendents meeting will consider the paper as will the SLT. All are urged to study the consultation document and feed back views.

(ii) Matters to/from Connexion

(a) Past cases review

Further details not yet available, but this is ongoing work.

(b) Memorial to Conference 2012

Bangor & Holyhead Circuit had submitted a memorial requesting that Local Preachers be able to suspend their training where personal circumstances required, with the time taken out not counting towards the 5 year training period. The meeting RECEIVED this memorial.

(iii) Y Cyngor

Next meeting was scheduled for 15 November 2011. Plans are in place for Synod Cymru are seek a new Chair from 2013 when the present Chair ‘sits down’.

(iv) Wales Training Network

There would be an extended Forum meeting in November looking at the “Fruitful Field” consultation document.

37/11 Ministry Issues

Ministerial Development Review

The Superintendents meeting had received MDR information and looked at the questions. As a pilot, three Circuits in the north and the Wales Chair will engage in the process.

38/11 Ecumenical Matters

“The Gathering” 13 October 2012

A delegation from each of the Covenanted churches will be invited attend. The numbers involved equated roughly to the Policy Committees of Wales Synod and Synod Cymru and confirmation would be at Y Cyngor. Circuits would be encouraged to send additional representatives.

The LEP chaplaincy at Cardiff Bay has been signed at The Lightship.

The meeting agreed in principal the Methodist/URC Liaison Group as sponsoring body and Rev Lin Healey would replace Rev Linda Woollacott.

The URC Moderator, Rev Peter Noble, had become the ecumenical officer at The Lightship and a new Moderator is to be appointed.

39/11 Date of next Meeting

Saturday 18 February 2012 at Newtown Methodist church, meeting to commence at 10.30am.