

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN WALES – THE WALES SYNOD

Sixth Meeting of Synod held on Saturday 10 September 2011
at Hope Community Church, Newtown, Powys

Present: Rev Dr Stephen Wigley (Chair) Rev Trevor Pratt (Synod Secretary)
142 members and 1 visitor as reported

Apologies/Dispensations: As received and recorded by the Secretary

Opening devotions were led by representatives of Methodist Women in Britain.

1. WELCOME

Revd Ian Waugh, Superintendent Minister of the Welshpool & Bro Hafren Circuit, welcomed Synod to the Circuit.

The Chair, Revd Dr Stephen Wigley, welcomed new ministers to Wales Synod and Revd Chris Gray replied on their behalf. New lay representatives identified themselves and Stephen welcomed them and also the young people of the Synod who had come to participate in the Youth Forum, which was running parallel to Synod.

2. ADMINISTRATION

(a) Revd Trevor Pratt announced notices of a general and administrative nature.

(b) Envelopes had been provided for the offering for the Ministers' Children's Fund and members were encouraged to Gift Aid their contribution. The donations totalled £224.38 of which £78.20 was made under Gift Aid.

(c) Synod **AGREED** the appointment of Revd Gareth Edwards, Mr Martin Hunt and Revd Soba Sinnathamby as scrutineers for the meeting.

(d) Members were requested to collect the Circuit bags before leaving. These had grown during the last Connexional year and were now made of hessian to withstand the weight of the contents.

(e) The Chair offered the prize for the first Twitter feed of Synod of his highly recommended book "A Guide to Balthazar's Trilogu" a very erudite discussion of a rather obscure theologian, as detailed in previous minutes.

(f) Correspondence

Synod **AGREED** to send letters to:

Revd Alan Jenkins and his wife Janet, following the death of Janet's mother

Revd Alan Stubbs on attaining his 80th birthday.

Revd Neville Stewart and Revd Brian Hodges on their on-going illness/infirmary.

Revd David Clarke and Revd Derek Rigby, both ill and unable to attend Synod

Deacon Denise Creed who had been unwell following her move from this Synod to Westminster Central Hall.

Revd Gareth Powell, sending congratulations on his becoming Assistant General Secretary of Conference

The Resourcing Mission Office in Manchester - a card was circulated during Synod for members to sign, expressing thanks and good wishes to all affected by the closure of the office

3. APPOINTMENT OF SYNOD OFFICERS

Synod **AGREED** to the appointments of representatives and officers as set out in the Handbook together with:

Mrs Dorothy Cresswell as Sabbaticals Officer

Mrs Sandra Williams as Methodist Women in Britain Secretary.

The chair reported that no appointment had been made for the vacant post of Assistant Chair and this would be considered in the proposed review of the leadership model later in the year.

The Revd Trevor Pratt, acting as Chair for this part of the meeting, informed Synod of the need for the appointment of a nominations committee to consider the possible invitation of Revd Dr Stephen D Wigley as Synod Chair for a further period. He outlined the procedure and time scale. and reminded everyone that Circuits had been circulated with the request for 2 names of people willing to serve on the committee, with a reminder of gender/ethnic balance. A wide-ranging consultation would commence in mid-October and responses made by the end of November. A progress report would be given to the Synod Leadership Team at its December meeting. The Nominations Committee would meet in January and its recommendations made to the Synod Policy Committee in February. It is proposed that the Synod Secretaries are non voting members of the nominations committee. The names of those nominated by Circuits were given and the proposal; made that the Committee be: Revd Lin Healey, Mr Tony Wiley, Deacon Lorraine Brown, Mr Arfon Williams, Revd Sue Lawler, Revd Una MacLean, Mr Andrew Williams, Mrs Linda Davies, with substitutes: Mrs Helen Judge, Mr Derek Scanlon, Mrs Meryl Thomas and Mrs. Sandra Powell. Synod **AGREED** to these people forming the Synod Nominations Committee.

Synod also **AGREED** that, in order to meet the timescale necessary without an extra meeting of Synod, that the Synod Policy Committee would not only consider the outcome of the consultation and the recommendation of the

Nominations Committee but would, subject to a 75% in favour, issue an invitation and formulate a reasoned statement for submission to Conference.

4. ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES TO CONFERENCE 2011

Representative requirements were: 3 presbyters; 4 lay people and 1 deacon.

The number of Presbyters and Deacon nominated matched the number required and Synod **AGREED** that they should all be appointed.

Those elected:

Revd Rosemarie Clarke	Mr Matthew Collins
Revd Peter Holwell	Mr Luke Curran
Revd Mark Rowland	Mr Derek Scanlon
Deacon Stephen Roe	Mrs Mary Williams

5. REPRESENTATIVES TO YOUTH CONFERENCE

In accordance with the change in Connexional policy s agreed by Conference 2011, Synod **AGREED** to support young people wanting to attend the Youth Assembly with £50 each, to a maximum of 10 people. Individual churches and circuits were requested to support and encourage young people wishing to attend the Youth Assembly.

6. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 4 SEPTEMBER 2010

The minutes were still displayed on the Synod website and had been circulated earlier in the year.

7. MATTERS ARISING

of Synod Paper copies would not be circulated in future unless requested. Members were reminded that the meeting next year would be held on Saturday 8 September at Hope Community Church, Newtown.

8. REPORT ON CONFERENCE 2011

Mr Derek Scanlon presented an enthusiastic report of his preparation for and experience at Conference. He felt enriched by the worship at, and experience of, Conference. He advocated that others put themselves forward as being at Conference develops a deeper understanding of Methodism.

Revd Stephen Wigley outlined some of the major items from Conference, including the “Big Society” and poverty. A major policy change regarding property sold had been made – where the sale proceeds of more than one property is used to fund a new scheme, such proceeds may be exempted from the Connexional levy. Stephen felt that it had been a good Conference, well chaired and the scene was well-set for next year with major decisions to be made following the critical review of training and budgets in the “Fruitful Fields” project.

Memorials from Synod to Conference 2012

M2 Leading & presiding This had been declined by the Memorials Committee and the status quo would prevail. Several similar memorials had been received and declined.

M3 Reception of Ministers into Full Connexion Following representation and the submission of this memorial some change had occurred with respect to expenses available to those who are to be received into full Connexion but not ordained. The response of Conference is that the subject “been referred to Methodist Council for review and report by 2013.”

General Secretary’s Report

Revd Rosemarie Clarke gave a presentation reflecting the decision by Conference to commend the report, and its proposed emphasis on “the Methodist Church as a “discipleship movement shaped for mission”, to the whole Connexion for study, response and action. In the report, the Revd Dr Martyn Atkins, the General Secretary, sets out a vision for the direction of travel of our church over the next few years which relates to our life, work, worship and mission. She emphasised its importance because resources will follow agreed priorities.

The full report can be downloaded from the Methodist website

Key issues were:

Connexionalism

- God’s properties and our stewardship The report suggests that inevitably we spend too greater a proportion of our finite resources of people, time and money on our buildings. So the big questions are:

What kind of spaces do we need to be the discipleship, missional movement God wants us to be in the 21st century?

If fewer, better buildings are needed, where should decision-making lie about such issues and future?

Patterns of ministry

- The Fruitful Field project offers many challenges, Hopefully, the phrase “the ministry of the whole people of God” will be familiar to us all – that understanding then shapes the use of and prioritising of resources
- Particularly in respect of presbyters, “many consider that the policy of spreading essentially pastoral duties ever more thinly throughout a circuit has reached the end of its usefulness or workability”.

- Some circuits have an inability, or unwillingness, to afford ordained ministry.

So where do we go from there?

Can we see beyond our own natural desire to defend 'our local church'/the status quo and find God's vision for how things might be.

What does it mean to be good stewards of the resources that God has given to us?

What do we need to stop so that we can do other good things better?

Synod broke into small groups to discuss the presentation. During the subsequent brief plenary session several ideas from Circuits/churches were mentioned, including a local ordained ministry; community outreach where a training week was planned by the church for community groups; a ministry of healing; paying administrators; release of resources through the disposal of buildings no longer fit for purpose;.

Deferred Special Resolution

Stephen outlined the changes that would be made to the Deed of Union through adoption by Conference 2012 of the resolution previously sent down for consideration by the Synod, Circuits and Local Churches. The word "minister" would be replaced by "Presbyter" or "Deacon" in instances where it was necessary to distinguish between the two. The word "ministry" would be replaced by "Presbyteral ministry" or "Diaconal ministry" where this was appropriate.

Several ordained members were concerned about the adoption of the word "Presbyter" and urged a vote against the resolution. The Synod Secretary reminded Synod that the decision to make that change had already been taken and that the Deferred Special Resolution was a result of that decision. A vote 'against' would not undo the former decision.

Trevor also gave a summary of the votes that had been taken so far by Circuits and Local Churches.

The result of the vote was:

For: 104 Against: 24 Present and not voting. 9

9. REPORT FROM SYNOD POLICY COMMITTEE

Mr Graham Illingworth presented the report, which had been distributed with the agenda and this was **ACCEPTED** by Synod.

10. REPORT FROM Y CYNGOR

Mr Graham Illingworth again spoke to a previously distributed report which was **ACCEPTED** by Synod. It was noted that the Connexional representative on Y Cyngor was Rev Mark Wakelin who was President-designate for 2012-13.

Rev David Easton asked whether it was possible for Y Cyngor, or some appointee, to become the body responsible for the disposal of property and the formation of redevelopment schemes. This would be placed before Y Cyngor.

11. 2012 OLYMPICS – "GOING FOR GOLD"

Revd Andrew Walker gave a brisk presentation about the potential church involvement in the Olympics next year. The Olympic torch relays would pass through Cardiff, Swansea, Aberystwyth and Bangor between 25 and 28 May 2012, visiting Aberystwyth at Pentecost. Church members were encouraged to host athletes' families, to act as pastors and to arrange / help with holiday clubs. Paper copies of the presentation would be distributed through ministers. The Prayer Handbook for 2011/12 included prayers for sport.

12. VISIT OF ZAMBIAN CHOIR

Revd John Atkinson reported that 30 ladies from the United St Matthews choir would be visiting Britain at the end of September and the beginning of October and there were opportunities for concerts in Wales on 3, 4, 5 and 6 October if Circuits/churches could volunteer to host them.

13. BOOKS PUBLISHED

Revd John Atkinson promoted a book entitled "The Healing Touch of God", a product of his sabbatical. Copies were available.

It was noted that Revd Alan Weatherspoon continued to publish his series "Jack the Station Cat" and that his contribution to charity was recognised and valued.

14. PRESENTATION FROM Methodist Relief & Development Fund MRDF

Audrey Skervin, of MRDF, gave an informative and moving account of the background to MRDF and of her visits to some of the MRDF projects. She explained the place of MRDF within Methodism. Synod was informed that speakers were available to visit Circuits/churches, including Mrs Gillian Pengelly from Cardiff [N.B. Anton & Jane Dowell (Buckley & Deeside Circuit) fulfil the same role.]

15. WALES TRAINING NETWORK (WTN)

Luke Curran, Richard Hall and Janet Hughes shared news from WTN. The handbook and programme had been distributed via the Circuit bags and members were encouraged to make full use of the courses.

CDiM was now included on Facebook and Twitter and tweets were being made during Synod. Presbyters and Deacons were encouraged to make full use of CDiM, an under-used resource.

Applecourt Theatre were holding a workshop in Cardiff on 13 October and this was bookable on the web. A "Storytelling Day" would be held on 24 September at the Ramada Hotel, Wrexham from 10.30am to 3.30pm. Finally, Luke reported that Mrs Nia Higginbotham was retiring at the end of the year and Synod **AGREED** to send her greetings and good wishes for the future.

15. METHODIST WOMEN IN BRITAIN - MWiB

Mrs Mary Williams reported on the developments leading towards the launch of MWiB. Every District was represented at the first Forum Meeting; the second meeting is in October. The new organisation is self-financing, so each Circuit/District's support is very much needed. The Easter Offering will go entirely to World Mission

CD's were available to both North and South executives to ensure everyone is kept informed. All Circuits were asked to provide an e-mail contact to ensure information is distributed effectively.

Members from South Wales will be attending the Bristol launch and those from North Wales will be sharing transport with Synod Cymru for the Chester launch of MWiB.

Future events planned in North Wales were detailed by Mary before Margaret Bizzell supplied information regarding events in South Wales. :

16. METHODIST HOMES

Miss Linda Davies reported that MHA is now recognised as the largest and highest rated care provider in England and Wales, caring for approximately 14,500 people in its various care homes and schemes.

MHA is seeking to extend its "Live at Home Schemes" to more areas. Methodists donate 90% of MHA's charitable income – use of gift aid donations is to be encouraged. This funding enables chaplains to be appointed in all care homes. It has also enabled music therapists to be appointed to all its 36 dementia care establishments.

The Care Quality Commission has identified MHA as at the top of their list of care services. 97% of care homes are rated as excellent standard. MHA are in the process of taking over 19 of Southern Cross Homes.

17. ACTION FOR CHILDREN AfC

Rev Chris Pritchard thanked Synod for its contributions to the celebration of the centenary of AfC in Wales. A concert would be organised in Rhyl on 27 October by the AfC projects. The final centenary celebration service would be held in Wrexham on 17 December. Chris also thanked Revd Alf Williams who had gained sponsors for his walk along the Cistercian Way during his sabbatical and raised £2246 for AfC.

18. SAFEGUARDING

Revd Susan McIvor reported that a review of safeguarding cases since 1950 in Wales and Leeds District is to take place. This is a pilot scheme and the Wales Synod has been selected as a result of our memorial to Conference.

19. REPORTS

A varied selection of brief reports were received from Circuits, each highlighting an encouraging development that had occurred in the year past.

20. WORLD CHURCH REPORT

Revd Lin Healey thanked everyone for their response to the questionnaire, the results of which showed:

57% use the Methodist Prayer Handbook	54% support other Overseas Projects
61% have an involvement with Fair Trade	13% support Tear Fund
69% are involved with MRDF	80% responded collectively to disaster appeals
87% support Christian Aid	43% have contact with people who have worked overseas.
20% support Mission Partners	

Synod was reminded that Contact details need to be up to date; e-mail is preferred because of its cost-effectiveness.

A "Roadshow" is planned to promote 'world church issues' and to address the confusion that seems to exist about the different ways the various Methodist mission bodies relate to each other. People in Synod with World Church experience were encouraged to add their names to a list of speakers for circulation, perhaps you could let me know.

Lin highlighted other ideas such as a "World Church snippets" email for dissemination across the Synod; exploration with your church family of support for a Mission Partnership.

21. ECUMENICAL MATTERS

Revd Gordon Sollis reported on the continuing work of the Commission of Covenanted Churches across Wales. The Covenant would continue with revised objectives. Cytûn had been represented at various National events including the Royal Welsh Show and the National Eisteddfod.

Revd Cathy Gale reported on her involvement in the Anglican / Methodist Joint Implementation Committee. The dialogue was on-going and she felt a renewed sense of Methodist identity emerging in the ecumenical situation. The JIC Interim Report would be available shortly.

Gordon reported on arrangements for The Gathering in the Great Hall of the University of Wales at Aberystwyth on 13th October 2012 when the new Cytûn produced ecumenical liturgy for Holy Communion would be used. The speaker would be the president of the World Council of Churches, Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, and it was possible that a guest speaker from the media would also be present.

Synod was pleased to hear of the continuing work of Cardiff Lightship which is run an ecumenical chaplaincy in which the Cardiff Circuit is in partnership. Synod agreed to support the celebration to be arranged for October 2012.

22. SYNOD TWEETS

Revd Robin Fox won the prize of the first person to 'tweet' in Synod. He commented that he would read the book with interest.

23. CLOSING DEVOTIONS BY YOUTH FORUM

The young people of the Youth Forum joined Synod for a report on their activity during the day. They presented a sketch entitled "Where is God?" Miss Emily Barry gave a slide presentation in the form of a meditation compiled from her photographs taken at the Youth Assembly last year. Megan and Hannah, "One Project Persons" informed Synod of the "One Project". Matt Collins presented a report about the Youth Assembly. Finally, the young people joined together to lead Synod in worship using prayers and material prepared during the Forum.