**The Methodist Church in Wales: Wales Synod Minutes of Synod Policy Committee meeting held via Zoom on 16th October 2021**

**Present:** Revd Dr Stephen Wigley (Chair), Kofi Amissah, Margaret Birch, Stephen Boxall, Martin Boyce, Rosemarie Clarke, Linda Davies, Rosemary Davies, Jacquie Evans, Gordon Gresswell, Graham Illingworth, Teddy Kalongo, Roger Langford (NLW), Cath Lewis, Martin Lougher, Leslie Noon,Pat Preston, Chris Randall, Janet Rees, Roger Smith, Margaret Webber, Alf Williams.

**Apologies:** Phil Poole

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, with a special welcome for those new to the committee.

**16/21 Opening devotions** were led by the Chair.

**17/21 Minutes** The minutes of the meeting held on 19th June 2021 were agreed.

**18/21 Matter arising**

11/21b Proposal for local hubs to access Synod. Difficult to manage in terms of voting for Synod.

**19/21 Implementing Synod policy**

**i) General**

**a) Finance update – general**

Mr Chris Randall, Synod Treasurer reported that the financial situation was roughly in line with the budget: the reduction in expenditure, mainly due to reduced travelling expenses, being balanced by a similar reduction in income. The accounts for the year ended 31st August 2021 are in preparation with matters of presentation to be settled before being distributed to SPC.

Thanks were expressed to the Synod Treasurer, Mr Chris Randall.

**b) Contribution to Pension Reserve Fund**

Following discussions at SLT, the Chair provided a review of Synod reserves held, and the projects which they are committed to support, together with a proposal that a contribution of £110,000 from Synod funds be made to the Pension Reserve Fund. (Being £50,000 from the Synod Advance Fund, £50,000 from Trust 14508, and £10,000 from Reserve Fund). This proposal was supported by the Synod Treasurer and was agreed by the meeting.

**c) Conversations with Synod Cymru** The detailed proposals prepared by the small group of representatives from the Synods were presented to both Synods in September. Synod Cymru amended the proposals in regard of language which Wales Synod could not accept. Conversations will continue but SPC was assured that the general direction of the conversations could not be changed without reference back to Synod.

**ii) Matters relating to Property**

Martin Lougher, Synod Property Officer, reported that training dates for the new streamlined process for sales had been distributed to property officers in Wales.

Martin requested notice of current property officers and reminded members that he should receive a copy of Quinquennial reports

Members were urged to sign up to Methodist Property Matters, in order to receive timely notice of relevant information and future training opportunities, and grants available.

Thanks were expressed to Martin

**20/21 SPC Business**

i) **Reinvitation of Synod Enabler.** A recommendation from the Synod Invitation Committee to invite Rev Irfan John to serve for a further three years was agreed.

ii) An **application for two (emergency) Lay Authorisations to Preside at the Lord’s Supper** for the remainder of this connexional year was approved for John Cullwick and Paul Cooke from MGM Circuit. Responding to the particular challenges of the illness of the second presbyter.

iii) A proposal for a **Synod** **missional enabler role** to develop Welsh language work in NE Wales from which a diaconal profile will be prepared was approved.

iv) **Closure of St David’s, Ty Sign (Newport and Lower Wye)** A request to cease public worship in the building was received and agreed. The building will continue to be used as a resource for new mission work.

v) A request to cease to worship at **Merlin Bridge, Haverford West (South West Wales)** and to dispose of the building, was received and agreed.

vi) A request to cease worship at **Panteg (Gwent Hills and Vales**) was received and agreed. Provisional approval was given for the disposal of the building should the circuit so decide.

The meeting paused to pray for the communities of the above three churches; their life, worship and fellowship over previous years and their future.

vii) **Development of Rhos on Sea church**, Conwy & Prestatyn. The application for a grant to finance a feasibility grant was approved.

viii) The committee was interested to hear of plans for financing the updating of **manse provision in the Conwy and Prestayn Circuit.**

ix) **Chairs’ sabbatical**. Approval was given for sabbatical leave between March to May 2022.

x) Approval was given for Gareth Edwards and Beverley Ramsden to take **sabbatical leave**.

xi) Sabbatical reports were received from John Hughes, Janet Park, Catherine Brobbey and John Brobbey.

**21/21 Chair’s Business**

**a) Stationing Update.** The Chair gave an update of the available appointments and ministers at the current time.The meeting was informed that the Synod is seeking to make 11 appointments in stationing for 2022, of which 6 are superintendencies. Four of those appointments have been designated as ‘critical’ and that this would be a particularly challenging year for stationing as currently there were 80 presbyters available for 133 appointments.

**b) Pastoral matters**

In considering pastoral concerns the Chair spoke of the stress following Covid in many places, individuals and circuits where there have been recent curtailments and the ministers and members of MGM Circuit.

**22/21 Matters to and from related bodies**

**a) Methodist Council/Conference**

Methodist Council meeting at Swanwick, will be looking at, amongst other things, the work of the connexional team and their workload, safeguarding and district reviews.

Thanks were expressed to Margaret Webber, Methodist Council Representative, for her helpful reports of meetings.

**God in love unites us.** Conversations have taken place in Superintendents meeting regarding the conversations which will be taking place in future months. The Chair expressed a willingness to support circuits in those places where this is likely to be a particularly sensitive matter.

**23/21 Ecumenical matters**

**Christian Aid:** CA are organising a march from Dewi Sant to the Senedd on 6th November related to COP 26 at which the Chair will be present.

The Grace was shared at the close of the meeting.

**24/21** Date of next meeting: 12th February 2021, 9.00am via Zoom