**The Methodist Church in Wales: Wales Synod Cymru Minutes of Synod Policy Committee meeting held via Zoom on 15th October 2022**

**Present:** Stephen Wigley (Chair), Kofi Amissah, Margaret Birch, Stephen Boxall, Andrew Charlesworth, Linda Davies, Jacquie Evans, Richard Gillion, Jennie Hurd, Barry Harkins, Graham Illingworth, Sue Keegan von Allmen, Howard Long, Martin Lougher, Ian Morris, Janet Park, Richard Parkes ,Malcolm Peacock, Pat Preston, Chris Randall, Janet Rees, Nick Sissons, Roger Smith, Margaret Webber,

The Chair welcomed everyone to this the First Synod Policy Committee of the new Synod Cymru Wales (SCW) meeting, with a particular welcome to Rev Andrew Charlesworth, Chair Designate - SCW

**01/22 Opening devotions** were led by Stephen Wigley (SDW).

**02/22 Apologies:** Rosemary Davies, Alun Jones

**03/22 Minutes** As this was the first meeting of SPC of the new WSC, there were no former minutes

**04/22 Any items to be added to the agenda:** None

**05/22 Matters from/for Connexion**

1. Mission Planning & God for All Strategy – SDW and Jennie Hurd (JH) met with Trey Hall to discuss a way forward for Wales. Further discussions to take place to aim to include projects already planned as well as brand new projects
2. Timetable for Chair’s invitation – JH has indicated she will not be seeking an extension of her role in Sept. 2024 when her present term ends. Sincere thanks expressed to Jennie for outlining her plans at this early stage. Permission to advertise the post sought from Secretary of Conference, but at present he wishes to consider the way forward by meeting with representatives of WSC. SPC noted that:

1. All the planning for the new synod had been based on the two Chair model and to deviate from that at this stage would not be welcomed by WSC.

2. Not to appoint a second Chair would be perceived as undermining our commitment to work in the Welsh language

3. The creation of the new WSC, indicating a two Chair model, was approved by Conference and the paper suggesting each District had one Chair was not.

4. The Secretary of Conference had been involved in some of the later planning meetings establishing the new Synod and the one Chair model was not discussed then.

Agreed a small group of those involved in the creation of the new Synod meet with the Secretary of Conference to establish a way forward **Action: SDW**

**06/22 Matters from/for SPC**

1. **Reflections on Synod meeting**- Agreed generally the first bi lingual meeting of WSC had gone very well, with many words of approval from a number of participants.The use of both Welsh and English work well and the translator was excellent. Issues raised at SPC included – difficult lighting, perhaps in future light as a general hall rather than theatre and problems with translation headphones for those with hearing problems – systems do exist to help and noted those planning future events need to ensure with equipment providers the right equipment is available for those who need it.
2. **Finance –** Chris Randall (CR) – Synod Treasurer had circulated with the calling papers for SPC out turn figures for the former Wales and Cymru Synods with a detailed income and expenditure account measured against budget for Wales Synod figures indicating his view of the year’s budget. The figures presented show that WSC is in a secure financial position. SPC approved the accounts in this form noting that the full standard form of accounts would come to the next SPC meeting. SPC expressed their thanks for all the work CR has undertaken on financial matters.
3. **Transfer of accounts and assets –** The aim is to ensure the accounts and assets of both former Synods are incorporated into one fund in WSC. Ongoing discussions with TMCP and the Charity Commission are ensuring this will happen in the correct way.
4. **Property including Rent Smart Wales –** Martin Lougher (ML) presented. Advice is all Circuits are fully prepared for the requirements of the Act by having a suitably trained ‘Connected Person’ who will be able to ensure all aspects of the act are covered locally. Full details available from ML – see Synod Handbook for details

Some Circuits having difficulty in getting Quinquennial Property reports completed – if they are prepared to undertake the role, architects and building surveyors who are RICS members are appropriate. Guidance is available on both TMCP and Methodist Property Web sites

1. **Safeguarding –** The recent Synod Safeguarding Group notes the importance of Superintendents ensuring DBS checks are up to date, particularly for ministers and supernumeraries undertaking pastoral work. Synod Safeguarding Officer, Rhian Evans-Hill to be invited to Supers/SLT residential meeting in November **Action: JH/SDW**
2. **EDI Officer –** Very many thanks expressed to Delyth Liddell for undertaking this role for a number of years. A replacement is being sought, but to date no name available. The possibility of a small group being established to undertake the task is under consideration
3. **Report from Synod MEL (Mission, Ecumenism and Learning Group) –** The membership of the group is outlined in the Synod handbook and is accountable to SPC. The Group will constantly review itself role and present to SPC.  **Action: JH/SDW**

**07/22 Matters from/for SLT**

1. **Residential meeting SLT/Superintendents –** the 24 hrs meeting planned for 8/9th November at the Commodore Hotel, Llandrindod Wells is currently being planned by JH/SDW. Full details will be circulated very soon.
2. **Synod Retreat –** The plan was to use Coleg Trefeca, but this is undergoing major refurbishment and may not be available for the planned January 2023 dates. Alternative venues are being sought and information will be circulated from the Synod office as soon as possible.
3. **Expenses for Supervision –** recently raised at SLT who recommended :

Supervisors – where traveling outside their home circuit, Synod will cover costs

Supervisees – costs to be covered by Circuit.

SPC confirmed this proposal.

The issue of people not having Zoom accounts often made supervision difficult – in such circumstances, people to contact Synod Office to discuss with Wendy, Synod Administrator.

1. **Supervision and MDR –** both still ongoing and should be undertaken on a planned basis. A revised document is available on MDR is available on the web site. Suggested the item be added to the SLT/Supers upcoming meeting. **Action: JH/SDW**

**08/22 Matters from/for churches**

1. **Requests to cease to meet:** Rhos On Sea, Conwy & Prestatyn Circuit – further discussions have brought the congregation to seek permission to cede to meet, having previously been given permission to sell the premises. SPC gave approval

Rhuddlan, Conwy & Prestatyn Circuit – a small congregation seeks permission to cease to meet and dispose of the premises, this request subject to Circuit Meeting approval in December 2022

SPC agreed subject to Circuit Meeting approval, which will be formally reported back to SPC.

**Action: JP**

1. **Request for financial support, Wrexham Circuit –** Richard Parkes reported the difficult financial position the Circuit was in following the effects of Covid on rental income – some £25,000 down and not recovered. The Circuit have reduced the ministry team and are looking at other ways of fund raising, but in the meantime, seek permission not to pay the Synod assessment. It was noted by the Synod Treasurer that the Wrexham Circuit has among the lowest capital reserves of any Wales circuit. The matter has been discussed to SLT and the item is now brought to SPC for consideration. Following discussion, including if it would be appropriate to review all Circuits’ financial position rather than act circuit by circuit, it was agreed that Wrexham Circuit be given permission not to pay the Synod assessment for this Connexional year.

**09/22 Chair’s business**

1. **Stationing update –**Synod faced with another challenging year, seeking 8 appointments (including 3 single station superintendents) and approval for 2 only critical appointments. Connexionally, there are 110 appointments being sought, with 73 presbyters available, therefore all will not be filled. There are more requests for Deacons than available. SDW will lead on Stationing for Synod and will be setting up Zoom meetings with Presbyters and Circuits as necessary over the next few weeks.
2. **Pastoral –** An increasing number of ministers are under health pressures, with one being terminally ill and another unable to work due to long term illness. Similarly, many lay folk are suffering with a variety of illnesses. It was acknowledged we need to be kind to ourselves and kind to others. Sympathy was offered to SDW and his family at the recent death of his mother in law.

**10/22 Ecumenical matters**

1. **Meeting with new Archbishop of Wales –** Andy John, the new Archbishop of Wales, and Bishop of Bangor recently called an initial meeting of Christian leaders in Wales to consider how we can come together to bless the people of Wales. There will be follow-up meetings to look at where different denominations are and look at the possibilities of sharing resources.
2. **Appointment of new CEO for Cytun –** Rev Aled Edwards, present CEO is retiring and the process of seeking a new CEO is underway. As yet, there has been no appointment and Aled has agreed to remain in post until a replacement is found.

**The next meeting of Wales Synod Cymru Synod Policy Committee will be held via Zoom on Saturday 11th February 2023, to commence at 9.00am**