**THE METHODIST CHURCH – NORTHAMPTON DISTRICT**

**Minutes of District Synod (Representative Session) held on 7 September 2024**

**at Brackley Methodist Church**

**District Chair :** The Rev’d Dr Sonia Hicks

**Synod Secretary :** Paul Spray

**1. Welcome**

Rev’d Sara Cliff (Superintendent Minister) and then the Chair welcomed Synod to Brackley.

**2. Worship**

The Early Years Group led opening worship.

Rev’d Nathan Falla and Rev’d Rachael Prince led the singing both during this worship and throughout the meeting.

**3. Opening business**

Scrutineers were appointed from the West Oxfordshire Circuit.

Attendance: The Synod was held in hybrid format with 95 members on site and 37 attending online.

Full or partial dispensations had been granted to the Rev’d Kim Shorley, Rev’d Sir Ralph Waller, and Rev’d Ian Worrall.

Apologies had been received from 17 supernumerary ministers and lay members of the Synod.

**Deaths**

The Synod noted the deaths since the last representative session of the Synod of the

Rev’d Frances Ballantyne and Rev’d Jeffrey Ward. Synod gave thanks in prayer for their lives and service.

**Letters of greeting were sent to** David Ballantyne, Rev’d Richard Baggott, Rev’d Ian Worrall, and to the Bishop of Peterborough, Rt Rev’d Debbie Sellin, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the ordination of women in the Church of England.

**4. Joys and challenges in our District**

Three circuits had been asked to make short presentations of two joys and one challenge that they experience. Rev’d Edson Dube, Superintendent, presented experience from Milton Keynes;

Rev’d David Speirs, Superintendent, from Northampton; and Rev’d Karen Beecham, Superintendent, from Loughborough.

There was then a period for people to consider what resonated for their Circuit from the joys and challenges that had been presented. Lay members of groups then presented their most important issue to the whole meeting.

**Synod adjourned for lunch for an hour**

**5. Representatives to Conference**

Rev’d Karen Beecham, Rev’d Sara Cliff and Rev’d James Patterson were elected as presbyteral representatives to the 2025 Conference, and Jane Allen, Jacqueline Commey, Anna Herriman and Olive Ruzvidzo as lay representatives. The Chair warmly thanked all who had put their names forward.

**6. District Environmental Policy**

Matt Forsyth, Mission Team Leader, presented the draft. Synod agreed the District Environmental Policy, by an overwhelming show of hands.

**7. Reflections on issues that came up at Conference**

Rev’d Bekkie Wright spoke about online church and Holy Communion, and Rev’d Calvin Cheung about Youth Ministry.

**8. World Methodist Conference**

Rev’d David Speirs reported on the Conference, which he had attended on behalf of four Districts.

**9. Who I am and what excites me – Rev’d Dr Sonia Hicks**

Our new Chair, Rev’d Dr Sonia Hicks, introduced herself and spoke of what excited her.

Asked how the District could support her, she thanked us for a warm welcome, and asked for continued prayer.

**10. Kingsthorpe Community Church**

Synod gave thanks for the eight year journey to establish the Kingsthorpe Community Church LEP, and resolved unanimously:

1)  To approve the Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) Documents; the CIO Constitution and LEP Partnership Agreement, and agree the formation of the Kingsthorpe Community Church LEP (a Baptist-Methodist Partnership), within the Northampton Methodist Circuit, in the 2024/2025 Connexional Year.

2)  To delegate power and authority to the District Executive to:  
a) Agree the precise start date of the Kingsthorpe Community Church LEP.  
b) Approve the Building Sharing Agreement for the LEP, under the Sharing of Church Buildings Act 1969. c) Enact any of the further processes and/or approve any documentation that is necessary for the formation and functioning of the LEP.

3)  To issue a direction under CPD SO 611 that, when the LEP is formed,  
the Church Council for the purposes of clauses 8 and 40 of the Deed of Union and of sub-paragraph 2(1) of the Model Trusts and for any other purpose for which a Methodist Church Council may be required, shall consist of the LEP Trustees, responsible for the general management of the partnership, together with (so far as not already members) a circuit steward and the ministers and probationers who would have been members of the council in accordance with clause (4)(i) to (vi) of Standing Order 610 had it been constituted under that Standing Order.

**11. Cease to meet for worship**

The District Executive had recommended to the Synod that the following four churches cease to meet for worship, whilst emphasising that the mission and ministry of the Methodist Church in those regions would continue:

* Adderbury Methodist Church, in the Banbury Circuit
* Childrey Methodist Chapel, in the Wantage and Abingdon Circuit
* Cowley Road Methodist Church, in the Oxford Circuit
* Elton Methodist Church, in the Peterborough Circuit.

Likewise the District Executive had recommended that permission be given, under CPD SO CPD 943(1), for worship to be discontinued at these two respective sites:

* Queensgrove Methodist Church, in the Northampton Circuit
* Kingsthorpe Methodist Church in the Northampton Circuit, to be succeeded by the LEP just approved.

These recommendations were approved unanimously. The Chair offered a prayer of thanks for the mission and service of faithful Methodist people in all these churches, and prayed for future mission in these areas in different but no less valuable ways.

**12. Appointment of District Officers**

Synod approved the appointment of District officers, as recorded on the District website.

**13. Thanks**

The Chair expressed her thanks to all those involved in Synod – the Brackley Church for their warm hospitality and amazing cake; the Early Years group; AV technicians; musicians; all who had spoken; and the Synod secretary.

**14. Closing worship**

The Chair led closing worship.

**Next meeting**

Spring Representative Synod – 10th May 2025, at Oadby in the Leicester Trinity circuit.

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Rev’d Dr Sonia Hicks Paul Spray

District Chair Synod Secretary