

The Constitution of the York Circuit

Under Section 58 of

The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the

Methodist Church (CPD)

Date of implementation

1st September 2018

(As adopted by the York Circuit Council on 20th June 2018, and approved by the Secretary of Conference on 25th June 2018)

This replaces the original Modified Constitution implemented on 1st September 2013.

Preamble to the Constitution

The York Circuit came into being on the 1st September 2012, replacing the previous York (North) and York (South) Circuits. The enlarged Circuit provided an opportunity to think creatively about ways in which the Methodist Church might engage in God's mission in York and the surrounding areas. New governance procedures were introduced which were designed to make better use of resources by facilitating the involvement of people and by being more efficient in decision making.

Section 58 (Circuits with Modified Constitutions) of CPD enables us to express our new ways of working in the following constitution. It is intended to enable the Circuit to be better equipped to respond to the opportunities of mission and more focussed on what we believe God is calling us to do.

The following principles are at the heart of our thinking:

- The importance of working in teams – theologically this is a way of expressing the life of the Church as the Body of Christ and practically it is a way of making the best use of people resources.
- A flexible way of working – to be responsive to changing situations
- Structures 'set in stone' should be avoided.
- Churches should be supported in their particular circumstances and helped to appreciate each other's needs and resources.
- Efficiency and accountability need to be held hand in hand

The Constitution of the York Circuit of the Methodist Church

I. General

a) Name

The Circuit to which this Constitution applies is the York Circuit, hereafter referred to as the Circuit.

b) Authority

This Constitution is applicable to the Circuit under Standing Orders 580, 581, 582, 583 and 584 of "The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church", hereafter described as CPD.

c) CPD

Under Standing Order 584 (2) nothing within this Constitution shall be deemed to be contrary to

- (i) Standing Order 500 (nature and purposes of a Circuit)
- (ii) Standing Order 502 (chairing and notice of meetings)
- (iii) Standing Order 503 (eligibility for appointment)
- (iv) Standing Order 504 (duration of appointments)
- (v) Standing Order 505 (connexional funds)
- (vi) Standing Order 514(2) (list of members of the Circuit Meeting)
- (vii) Standing Order 515 (responsibilities)
- (viii) Standing Order 516 (memorials)
- (ix) Standing Order 517 (procedure at the Circuit Meeting)
- (x) Standing Order 518 (irregularities)
- (xi) Section 52 (Circuit ministry)
- (xii) Section 54 (Circuit invitations and appointments)
- (xiii) Standing Order 550 (obligatory appointments)
- (xiv) Standing Order 552 (ex-officio membership)
- (xv) Section 56 (local preachers)
- (xvi) Standing Order 574 (Chair's rights on appointment of lay employee)

2. The Circuit Council

a) General

A Circuit Council will be established as the meeting designated to fulfil the role, functions, responsibilities and powers of the Circuit Meeting for the purposes of the Deed of Union, Model Trusts and Standing Orders contained in the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church. The Circuit Meeting is hereafter described as the Circuit Council.

b) Responsibilities of the Circuit Council

The work of the Circuit Council has a four-fold focus as follows:

- Celebration and Sharing of News and Concerns
- Consultation
 - On matters referred from District and Connexion
 - On matters of mission, social justice and proposed Circuit-wide actions in the light of the Circuit's Vision Statement
 - On internal and devolved business
- Trusteeship
 - Legal and Safeguarding
 - Financial and Property
 - Constitutional Matters (including Memorials to Conference)
- Decision-making
 - Nomination of Candidates for Ministry
 - Responses to recommendations from Invitation Committees or similar
 - Elections and Appointments to this and other Methodist and/or regional bodies
 - Appointment of the Circuit Stewards

c) Chair of the Circuit Council

The Chair of the Circuit Council will be defined and appointed in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 502. The Chair will at the start of each Connexional year, appoint in writing a deputy with the right to preside over the Circuit Council as and when requested by the Chair and the Circuit Stewards. The appointment of a deputy will not alter the composition of the Circuit Council as defined in Section 2 (d).

d) Composition of the Circuit Council

(1)

The meeting will consist of the voting members listed in sections (i) to (vii) below. Anyone appointed who is under the age of 18 will be able to attend and speak on all matters but will not be able to vote on managing trustees' business. The names of the voting members will be registered each year with the Charity Commission as the Charity Trustees of the Circuit. In cases of absence, none of the members of the Circuit Council will be eligible to appoint substitutes.

(i) The Superintendent Minister of the Circuit.

(ii) All ministers appointed to the Circuit and those authorised to serve under SO 732 and 733.

(iii) Two Local Preachers elected by the Leaders of Worship and Preachers' Meeting to be on the Circuit Council. They will usually serve for a maximum of 3 consecutive years (and in any case for a maximum of 6 consecutive years).

(iv) The Circuit Council Secretary

(v) The Circuit Stewards (including the Circuit Financial Steward).

(vi) The Council will appoint two people to represent the views and interests of young people within the Circuit. Anyone thus appointed who is under the age of 18, can only serve if the written and signed consent of their parent(s) or guardian(s) has been sought and received. This written consent will be lodged with the Superintendent Minister or their designated alternative.

(vii) One representative for each Church Council within the Circuit. Each representative will be elected for a period of 1 year. The representative can be re-elected but can usually serve for a period of no more than 3 consecutive years (and in any case for a maximum of 6 consecutive years)

(viii) The Council will invite, to be present at and participate in its meetings, one Ecumenical representative, selected from any official Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP), as designated under Standing Order 412 (2). Such a representative will be a non-voting member of the Circuit Council as described in Standing Order 503 (1) (ii).

(2)

(i) The members of the Council will be nominated by the relevant bodies indicated in Section 2(d) 1, and their names presented to the Annual General Meeting (see Section 4) for appointment. The names of those nominated will be made known to the Churches in the Circuit at least 28 days before the Annual General Meeting. Any intention to oppose any nomination shall be indicated in writing to the Superintendent Minister at least fourteen days before the meeting.

(ii) In the case of each member of the Circuit Council, their terms of service will be deemed to start from 1st September of the relevant Connexional year.

(iii) Anyone appointed under Section d (1) (iii) to (vii) above cannot normally be a member of the Circuit Council for more than 12 consecutive years and will be ineligible to serve again for a period of two years.

(iv) Where casual vacancies occur during the year, the appointing body may nominate replacements. The Circuit Council will fulfil the role of the AGM in appointing such persons to the Circuit Council until the next AGM and will inform the Charity Commission.

(v) In making appointments to the Circuit Council, the Circuit AGM shall consider the composition of the Circuit Council with regard to age, sex and ethnic origin.

(vi) If required, a Circuit Leadership Team will consist of those appointed under Sections d (1) (i), (ii) and (v) above. Its purpose will be to act on behalf of the Circuit Council between Circuit Council meetings when rapid decisions need to be made. Any decisions made will be reported to the next Circuit Council.

e) Communication with the Circuit

The Circuit Council will have at the heart of its work, the principle that under God, it consults with and takes its lead from the wider Circuit of which it is a part. It will communicate with the Circuit in many ways, including:

(1) By the use of formal "Representations" from Church Councils. A Representation from a Church Council will be a formal letter from such a body to the Circuit Council, and will be sent to either the Chair, Deputy Chair or Secretary of the Circuit Council. The Representation must make a statement or request an action from the Circuit Council that is within the Circuit

Council's competence. They will be recorded in the minutes of the Circuit Council. The Circuit Council is required to then give a formal and written reply to the Church Council making the representation, describing in detail its response. This reply will also be recorded in the minutes of the Circuit Council.

(2) The Circuit Council shall ensure that its minutes are available for any member of the Circuit to be able to view except when matters confidential to the Council are recorded. In such cases only headings shall be contained in the version of the minutes made available to members of the Circuit.

(3) The Circuit Council will endeavour to ensure that all its meetings are open to members of the Circuit to be able to attend and watch, but not to take part in unless invited to do so. All parts of a properly constituted Circuit Council meeting will be deemed to be open to the public, unless, due to the nature of the business, the Council votes by a simple majority to go into closed session. In closed sessions, only full voting members of the Circuit Council, and anyone the Council allows by a simple majority to remain, can so remain, within the meeting.

(4) The Circuit Council may receive letters and representations from any individual within the Circuit on any issue within its competence.

(5) All members of the Circuit Council will be required to keep themselves actively informed of events, activities and opinions within the Circuit, as they are in practice able to do so.

(6) The Circuit Council shall find ways of monitoring the diversity of its membership and ensuring that it adequately represents the make-up of the Circuit. Where gaps are identified, it shall ensure that the views of those not represented are sought and brought to the Council's attention.

3. Circuit Action and Task Groups

(a) Action Groups

The Circuit Council will establish Action Groups that will be answerable to the Circuit Council, for the running of particular areas of the Circuit's life and work. The Circuit Council as managing trustees will be ultimately responsible for any decisions taken.

Membership of these Action Groups will be flexible and will be a mixture of ordained and lay, and each will include a Circuit Steward.

Each of these Action Groups will work to agreed Terms of Reference, which will be set by the Circuit Council. The Terms of Reference, with the date they were agreed, will be made available in written form to every member of the Action Group. Their membership and Terms of Reference will be published as part of the AGM.

The Circuit Council will have the power to establish other groups within the Circuit that will be answerable to it.

(b) Task Groups

The principle of churches working together for purposes of mission, worship and service is vital and enshrined within the principles outlined in the preamble to the constitution (Sections 2(a) and 2(b)). Such joint working is encouraged already between churches under shared pastoral oversight. However, the Circuit Council will also encourage churches and individuals to work together in areas sharing particular aspects of their life – e.g. rural ministry, youth work, ecumenical partnerships, heritage opportunities. To this end the Circuit Council will include on its agenda every year an item exploring what opportunities need support or encouragement, and where appropriate, establish a Task Group to help develop the work, and if needed, bring proposals for further consideration.

4. Annual General Meeting

a) General

The Circuit Council will organise the Annual General Meeting of the Circuit. The meeting will be open to all members of the congregations within the Circuit and all Presbyters and Deacons residing in the Circuit. The purpose of the AGM is to celebrate the past year's life of the Circuit. Within the meeting, there will be a formal presentation by the Circuit Council on their work, with an adequate opportunity for feedback and comments to be made from the floor. All members of Churches within the Circuit and all Presbyters and Deacons residing in the Circuit and in attendance at the Annual General Meeting will be entitled to one vote each.

b) Extraordinary General Meetings

The Circuit Council may call an Extraordinary General Meeting at any stage during the year. An Extraordinary General Meeting may also be called if 6 Church Councils or a sixth of the Church Councils in the Circuit, whichever is the smaller, so petition the Circuit Council. Voting membership of an Extraordinary General Meeting will be open to any member of a Church within the Circuit and all Presbyters and Deacons residing in the Circuit and in attendance at the Extraordinary General Meeting. During the Extraordinary General Meeting, the Circuit Council will give a presentation on their work, and formal motions will be able to be presented from the floor by a proposer and a seconder, providing both the proposer and seconder are full members in good standing within a Church within the York Circuit or are a person specified in Standing Order 510 (1) (ii).

5. Reviewing and renewing this constitution


The ways of working within the Circuit shall be constantly under review and shall inform part of the Circuit Council's report to the AGM.

Every three years the Circuit Council will establish a group of members of the Circuit to undertake a full and formal review of the Constitution, the way it is working, the extent to which it has fulfilled its responsibilities under Section 2(b) and the ways in which it has promoted mission. If the group concludes that changes need to be made, either to the Constitution or the ways of working in the Circuit, they will bring recommendations to the Circuit Council which will act in accordance with Standing Order 583.

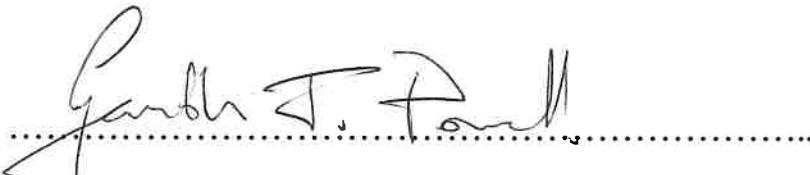
Any proposals for changes will be formally proposed to the Circuit Council. Having received and discussed these proposals, the Circuit Council will ensure that a consultation of the members of the Circuit and its Churches is carried out on the proposed changes. A report on these consultations will be prepared and, with due care taken to ensure that confidences are not breached, made available to all members of the Circuit Council and to any member of the Circuit who requests a copy.

The Circuit Council will give a suitable presentation the Constitution review to the Circuit Annual General Meeting or to an Extraordinary General Meeting. The presentation will include their proposals for any changes to the constitution.

Once approval has been obtained from the Secretary of Conference, the changes to the Constitution shall take effect from the next following 1st September.

Signed by 

Revd. Dr. Keith R. Albans (Superintendent Minister)

Signed by 

Revd. Canon Gareth J. Powell (Secretary of the Methodist Conference)

14th July 2018

