

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS RE GOVERNANCE

- Below are the questions asked at the meeting of Church Councils on January 15th. Questions which cover the same ground have been grouped together, with a common answer.
- The answers include those given verbally at the meeting, plus further expansion & detail as appropriate.
- In some cases it is not possible to answer questions asked, either fully or at all. However, these questions are included for purposes of completeness.
- Some questions can only be fully answered as the process evolves and details become available in the future.

STRUCTURE OF NORTHAMPTON METHODIST CHURCH

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
<p>How many churches need to opt in for it to be viable? How many churches need to sign up for the proposal to be viable? What is the minimum number of churches to go ahead?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least two churches.
<p>How many people from each church would be represented on NMCC How would structure work with regards to representation – same number for each WC? Representation? Will it be proportional? Smaller communities the same as larger? How many will be on it from each worshipping community? How many representatives from each church would be needed on the Church Council? How many will be on it from each worshipping community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial trustee body (Church Council) for NMC: the old Church Councils (CC) of those churches who have decided to be part of NMC to nominate ONE MEMBER of their Worshipping Community (WC) to be a managing trustee and Church Steward of NMC. • Other members of this trustee body to be elected at NMC’s first General Church Meeting (in September). The number so elected will match the number of WCs who are part of NMC. • NMC Church Council can also appoint further members (up to 15); • Members appointed to NMC Church Council are representing NMC <u>NOT</u> their Worshipping Communities. • In addition, NMC will need a Treasurer, a CC Secretary & a Safeguarding Officer. Other officers, as required by CPD, would also be appointed. • NMC will set up committees for Property & Finance, and for Mission. Both of these committees may have members who are not NMC CC members. The Mission committee will provide a framework, working with Local Teams within WCs.
<p>Will representatives meet a certain criteria i.e. how will people be chosen?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above.

<p>How is the church representative chosen and have they a term of office?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional members may well be elected to meet specific requirements. • Members of NMC Council will serve the same term of office as all Church Council appointees on an annual basis.
<p>Who in this room is going to volunteer to be this ‘central ‘church council? What if a worshipping community did not have anyone able or willing to be a rep on the NMC? Are there individuals already happy to take on the role of finance etc. in the NMC?</p>	<p>Church Councils are required to nominate one church member to be a managing trustee and Church Steward of NMC when initially joining NMC. Churches unable to do this will not be able to join NMC at its formation.</p>
<p>Is this a one off decision? Could a church join NMC at a later date? Can churches join later?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, churches can join at a later date. After NMC has been formed churches can apply to NMC CC to join NMC.
<p>How often does Northampton Church Council meet & where? How often will the NMCC meet? Churches will get frustrated with time it takes to receive response for action – how often will NMCC meet?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to create a new body – Northampton Methodist Church (NMC) – aiming for 1st September 2022 start. • NMC CC will meet monthly initially, during the set up process. • The venue for meetings will be for the NMC Council to decide. • September – December 2022 to be a transition period, so that by January 2023 NMC, WCs and their Local Teams will be up and running.
<p>How do we ensure members of Northampton Church Council are impartial? i.e. don’t show allegiance to one church.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members appointed to the NMC Church Councils are representing NMC <u>NOT</u> their Worshipping Communities.
<p>Will the people acting for NMC as finance or property officers be paid? Voluntary positions? Or paid? On the proposed NMC – for Finance and property? Will NMC employ more staff to do some of the work? Will the treasurer and the safeguarding jobs be paid? Will the roles be paid i.e. treasurer?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The officers of NMC will be recruited on a voluntary basis. This does not preclude the employment of paid staff, consultants, or advisors. The NMC Treasurer will be a member of the Methodist Church.
<p>How does this NMC affect the day to day week to week running of the church?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Teams will be responsible for fulfilling the Our Calling priorities in each WC.
<p>How would the dialogue work with the new NMC? Remote representation means losing the ‘personal’ contact. Those on proposed NMC may not know about other communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMC Church Council will regularly consult with Local Teams and there will be constant dialogue. • NMC Church Council will have members from across all the WCs

<p>What happens if we don't join?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches which choose not to join NMC will continue as at present, with responsibility for meeting assessments, managing all the responsibilities of trustees, fundraising for projects, dealing with property issues, etc.
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FINANCE

<p>QUESTIONS</p>	<p>ANSWERS</p>
<p>Is there going to be one bank account for Northampton Methodist church? Will all churches who join be expected to handover all finances now in place?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All bank accounts of a WC will be formally transferred to NMC; actual bank account consolidation will be a long term task, with a clear objective to minimise bank charges. • The unrestricted existing balances of the General Accounts of WCs will become the General Account of NMC; • The restricted & designated funds of WCs will be separately identified as they join NMC .
<p>How does all this affect the individual communities' finances? Circuit assessment, etc? Will all bills (eg electric) be redirected to main office & not individual churches? Who pays the bills? Electricity, Water etc. if on the new system? In relation to Kingsthorpe who would pay the rent of the Pastures for example or other churches who might need to rent property for meetings?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The payment of assessments will be the responsibility of NMC from the 'common pot' – the General Account containing monies from all WCs. This will be the collective responsibility of all members. • Looking at a wider administrative role – NMC would have responsibility for the bills to be paid. • Appropriate Christian Copyright Licences will be purchased for all the activities of NMC following review of requirements for each WC . • Contracted roles, e.g. cleaners, will be engaged by NMC, who will arrange the contracts.
<p>Can we withhold funds for our traditional charity giving – if raised for that purpose? If we want to do a charity coffee morning would we need permission from NMC and who would send the money off? Can charity contributions / special collections still be controlled by the worshipping community? E.g. Bible Society, Action for children, coffee mornings? Fundraising – individual churches fund raising – where will it go? How will the fundraising work? What happens to money raised by a worshipping community for a specific</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charity collections etc. – WCs can have specific funds for specific purposes – specific funds put aside for that church to continue as it does today. • WCs will be able to fund raise for specific projects (e.g. new kitchen) – money will be ring-fenced. Money from NMC may also be available. • WCs can collect money for specific charities, ensuring adequate record keeping is maintained. Arrangements for handing over funds will be subject to the specific situation.;

<p>local purpose? E.g. bazaar, panto etc? Fundraising events for specifics – by each worshipping community?</p>	
<p>How will people be encouraged to contribute to a central financial pot & feel that it is fairly distributed? Finance – will people give as much when don't have a say where money goes or is spent? Will people be happy to contribute finance to projects not in their area?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As today there will remain a need for sacrificial giving and effective stewardship for NMC. • NMC Church Council meetings will be open meetings and can be attended by any member of NMC. • NMC worshipping communities can make submissions to NMC Church Council meetings to indicate spending priorities.
<p>Will each church have petty cash for minor expenses? Where will it come from? Could a worshipping community maintain some of its own money? E.g. have a petty cash fund.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each WC will need a book-keeper to facilitate day to day receipts and payments. • Each WC can hold an amount of petty cash, and will be reimbursed as required.
<p>Outreach - will we have funding available to carry out outreach or do we have to request funding? Will individual Junior Churches be able to access money? E.g. for a trip out. How will this be done?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each WC will be able to make financial decisions up to an agreed limit (limit to be discussed); • As currently local organisation accounts would continue to be held and be formally overseen as part of the accounts of NMC.
<p>What will happen if money needs to be paid into a bank?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book-keepers will co-ordinate with the Church Treasurer regarding bank deposits.
<p>How will the transfer from treasurer to book keeper be managed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handover arrangements will be co-ordinated by the Church Treasurer, with support and oversight from NMC Church Council.
<p>Any legacy bequeathed to a particular church – what happens to it?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those funds will remain ringfenced for that worshipping community. If the legacy was for a specific purpose then that will also be respected.
<p>Gift Aid protected by worshipping community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gift Aid will follow where the donation has been allocated to as currently.
<p>Is it all or nothing or can we just hand over the finance part of the church and keep the rest of it as it is?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trusteeship must be transferred to NMC. NMC Church Council may then delegate powers and responsibilities to each local team, based on a dialogue with them, and the needs of the local context.

Please could we have some examples of specific situations – e.g. church boiler needs replacing, community receives specific requests?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions related to the replacing of a church boiler or similar major work would be the responsibility of NMC Council.
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PROPERTY

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
<p>Can the new NMC council make the decision to close any of the worshipping communities (Our Churches)?</p> <p>NMC – does it have the power to close individual church buildings?</p> <p>Who will make decision for closures in the future?</p> <p>If a church building needs to close or major works needs doing – how is the future of that worshipping community decided?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NMC Council can make a recommendation to close a church building – but would only do so in dialogue with the WC and needs formal approval from the District.
<p>Will the worshipping community still be responsible for small property matters and will there be a fund to cover this?</p> <p>Who is responsible for arranging and supervising and contacting outside tradesman to undertake maintenance and repairs?</p> <p>Property – would local tradesman still be able to be used for Church maintenance emergencies etc.?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic, routine maintenance can continue to be overseen by each WC. • Delegated powers up to a certain amount. • Property matters – minor matters: churches will be empowered to do that using local lists of agreed contractors. • NMC will also have a list of contractors provided for all WC to use, especially for emergencies. However, if the cost is above a given level (to be decided by NMC CC), the work must be agreed beforehand.
<p>What if the boiler conks out on a Sunday morning?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You would ring the boiler man and then the bill would go to the NMC to pay.
<p>Will the NMC deal with Quinquennial inspections and the follow up work?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes.
<p>How will NMC assess property needs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMC will be responsible for managing major items of maintenance; this could involve a paid role.
<p>If church owns an additional property how will this be managed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional property would be managed by NMC Church Council.
<p>Bookings and lettings – Will there be a central person to help or oversee each church community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This would be determined by NMC’s Church Council. It is hoped that this might happen and is certainly possible under the arrangements.

SAFEGUARDING

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
What would be the allocation of responsibility?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is anticipated that there would be one safeguarding officer for NMC providing advice and support to all WCs along with a common safeguarding policy.• Responsibility for reporting safeguarding concerns remains everybody's responsibility.

LOCAL TEAMS IN WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
How much power / control will each church have (when making decisions)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each Local Team within a Worshipping Community will have delegated powers and responsibilities based on the 'Our Calling' priorities and the needs and capacities of that community. These responsibilities will be determined by NMC in dialogue with the Local Teams.•
What will local worshipping team consist of and how often will they meet?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is expected that each WC will form a Local Team (LT) to work on Our Calling, focusing on pastoral care, worship, work with children & young people, fellowship, serving the local community, discipleship, etc.• WCs will nominate their own Worship Stewards, Communion Stewards, Pastoral Co-ordinators and Junior Church leaders, plus a book-keeper, who will be ratified by NMC CC.• The LT will meet regularly to plan, action & evaluate these areas, and feed back to NMC Mission Committee. This will be a two-way process as we look to share the good news and grow disciples across the town.• Churches will have much autonomy about how they organise and use their Local Teams to meet Our Calling and the Circuit Mission emphases.• Appointments to Local Teams will be submitted to NMC Church Council for final confirmation and approval.
We need to have a building and a roof over heads to run junior church, brigades etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Churches do not need to OWN a building to do outreach / mission.

<p>We as churches do a remarkable thing with mission: old people, young people. Sounds like we are not doing what we should when we are. Where is all the money coming from?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current mission activities are fully acknowledged but our desire is to help sustain and encourage these and to continue and develop them more widely. • We hope and pray that WCs will have access to a wider & larger range of resources & expertise, sharing & working together across NMC.
<p>We will be able to still make requests on a plan?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preaching plan preparation will focus on effective resourcing of worship at all WCs as now. •
<p>How would LEP arrangements work for say Kingsthorpe?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While there is no current decision regarding formalising the current worship arrangements in Kingsthorpe a move to NMC would not preclude this occurring. .
<p>Will we be allocated a minister for our church?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Worshipping Community will have a minister for pastoral oversight, as currently.

OTHER

<p>QUESTIONS</p>	<p>ANSWERS</p>
<p>This scheme addresses governance but does not address problems of too many churches. Should the number of buildings be condensed first before governance? (As a staged process)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ‘Casting the Net’ review, that concerns church buildings, is a separate but parallel process. Changes in governance and trusteeship are not dependant on the outcomes of the ‘Casting the Net’ review.
<p>Should we accept UK Methodism is dying – should we be more ecumenical?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMC will have the ability to strengthen and build ecumenical relationships.
<p>Will there be a single website for NMC that all the worshipping communities can use to aid communities and coordination between the pieces of the jigsaw while showing a bigger picture of the circuit?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes.
<p>What is the proposed name? Whether we are in or out can we still be called a church and not a worshipping community? Each WC should be called a church. Can we keep our name?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The working name is ‘Northampton Methodist Church’. • Each WC could be called ‘Northampton Methodist Church in (e.g.) Duston / Kingsley / Roade, etc. To be discussed.

Is it for a Church Council to make the choice to opt in?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes.
<p>Timescales?</p> <p>When should this be set up and when do we hope to get this up and running and when do church councils have to have made this decision?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church Councils to hold a meeting (an Extraordinary Meeting, if necessary) to discuss and vote on the proposals (attached) en-bloc – if possible by the end of February. • At least two of Pam, David and Keith will be in attendance at each Church in order to support you through this process. • Need to create a new body – Northampton Methodist Church (NMC) – aiming for 1st September 2022 start; • September – December 2022 to be transition period, so that by January 2023 NMC, WCs and their Local Teams will be up and running; • It is recognised that this time scale is ambitious – but the PRAG report and subsequent events of the last 2 years demonstrate we cannot afford to wait.
Can churches opt out if this all goes wrong?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches that join NMC, becoming worshipping communities, will cease to have their own separate legal identities. Managing Trusteeship will be invested in NMC Church Council. Any protocol on this would need to be agreed by NMC Church Council.
Links with the District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMC as a church within the Northampton Methodist Circuit will be part of the Northampton Methodist District.

CIRCUIT MEETING INFORMATION

There were no questions about the Circuit Meeting at the meeting. However, you may find the information below helpful:

- The Circuit Meeting will continue to meet, with representatives from all churches in the Circuit;
- NMC will have 2 representatives for every WC which is part of it;
- NMC will decide who these representatives are: there will not necessarily be two from each WC, as they are representing NMC NOT their WC.