

Minutes of the MET AGM 10th October 2020 at 4.30 pm via Zoom

The Chair, The Revd Dr David Hull welcomed everyone. There were over 100 participants taking part in this online AGM.

Apologies were received from Julie Morton, John & Susan Hargreaves, Alan Watkins and Keith Osborn. [Steve Wild gave his apologies following the meeting].

Opening Devotions were led by the Chair from Ephesians 4 reflecting on how we should each live a life worthy of the calling we have received.

The **AGM Minutes and EGM Minutes for 2019** were agreed and accepted.

Approval of Accounts

Fiona Budd (Bookkeeper) gave an overview of the accounts for the year ended 31 August 2019. The following points were noted:

- Receipts: income was higher than in previous years.
- Payments: the major items of expenditure were the costs of employment of the Development Worker and the Administrator, and MET Connexion.
- The Development Worker was part time in 2019 – hence the lower figure in Payments.
- The Marriage and Human Relationships Appeal had brought in a sizeable income.
- The final amount of grant from the Rank Trust for the Development Worker had been received in August 2020.

The Accounts were approved.

Proposal to move to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

The Chair explained that as well as being a charity, MET is an incorporated company which currently files dormant accounts. Since we were incorporated, a new structure, that of the CIO, has been introduced. This offers a better structure for MET as a charity. As the Methodist Church no longer provides a mechanism for paying the stipend and pension contributions of our Development Worker, we need to ensure we have the most appropriate structure as an employing body. MET has sought advice on this matter and the CIO is deemed to be the most appropriate option to adopt. A formal resolution will be brought to the next AGM.

Chair's Report

The Chair reported that it had been a very eventful year and that MET work had been turned upside down through Covid-19. He thanked the Development Worker for his work during this time and for readily adapting to a change of role during these different circumstances. The Chair shared that his role had changed in the last year; he remains a Methodist Minister in Full Connexion and has been released to work with the Free Methodist Church. This new role releases him for up to two days per week to devote to his responsibilities as Chair of MET. He expressed

his gratitude to MET partners for all their support during the turbulent time and also expressed his immense gratitude to his wife Sarah, for supporting him in his ministry.

God in Love Unites Us (GILUU) continues to be an issue within the MC. The Chair stated that he had brought forward his re-election as Chair to the AGM in 2017, with the intent that he would continue in the role of Chair only if the AGM voted to remain faithful to the Bible. With the unanimous vote of the AGM in 2017, he has sought to remain faithful to this commitment through conviction, clear conscience and compassion.

He underlined that MET is not a one issue party, but has many other projects in which it is involved and engaged.

The Development Worker Report was presented by Derek Balsdon

Derek stated that he had now been in this role for over two years. He expressed his gratitude to David and Marian as fellow colleagues in the work and also for the support of the MET Executive.

Zoom conferencing has presented both a challenge and an opportunity to him. It has enabled him to set up the MET online prayer meetings and Bible studies held twice a week; these provide an opportunity for fellowship and sharing together and also offer a spiritual lifeline for many. Derek will continue to offer online opportunities for prayer, fellowship and teaching for any church, circuit or fellowship group. However looking to the year ahead, he would like to make some provisional bookings for visits to churches. These can always be transferred to Zoom if necessary. Conferences coming up in the near future on Zoom are as follows: Digging for Treasure (Sat 17 October) and Speak-Lord: Discerning God's Voice in a Confusing world (Sat 31 October).

Remaining Faithful: Derek is in contact with many individuals and churches around the Connexion, many of whom are wondering about their future with the MC. He also facilitated the online day conference on 18 July.

Derek had participated in the production of the MET 3 minute promotional video which will soon appear on the home page of the MET website.

'Raising up a new generation of Wesleys', is an exciting new part of the work and as the Development Worker, he will be supporting that vision in whatever way he can.

The Chair Report and Development Worker report, together with the other Executive reports had been circulated in the July mailing and electronically prior to the meeting were received and accepted.

Nominations for the following were unanimously accepted:

- Vice Chair: Gareth Higgs
- Prayer Secretary: Roz Addington
- Rising Generation: Nathan Veall

The Chair thanked Tim Woolley as Vice-Chair and Len Pereira as co-ordinator for Equipping for Ministry. They both will conclude their terms of office at the end of this year (31 December 2020). Len will however oversee the EfM conference in February 2021.

The Chair extended his thanks to the Executive and his fellow Trustees.

Special Resolution

The trustees had proposed a Special Resolution temporarily to amend Clause 5:1 of the MET Constitution until 31 December 2022.

Clause 5.1: Full membership shall be open to any member of the Methodist Church who is in sympathy with the aims and basis of the Movement. Associate membership shall be open to non-members of the Methodist Church who are in sympathy with the aims and basis of the Movement. Only full members shall be eligible to vote at Meetings of the Movement and to serve on its Committees.

Clause 5.1 proposed temporary amendment: Membership shall be open to any evangelical Methodist or Wesleyan Christian who is in sympathy with the aims and basis of the Movement. Only members shall be eligible to vote at Meetings of the Movement and to serve on its Committees.

The Chair introduced the Resolution. This proposal had been presented given the uncertain times that the MC is currently experiencing and, should the provisional resolutions regarding God in Love Unites Us be ratified, then a significant number of MET members including members of the Executive may find themselves unable to continue as members of the Methodist Church.

The trustees proposed this amendment as they considered future outcomes and so wished to identify potential risks and to mitigate against them. This temporary amendment would remove the requirement to be a member of the Methodist Church and would safeguard current MET members from having to resign their membership. Should this amendment pass, then it would revert to the current wording of Clause 5:1 of the Constitution on 1 January 2023 or be reviewed before this date.

The Chair invited discussion 'from the floor' on this proposed amendment. The discussion was long and involved, with strong views which expressed both 'for' and 'against' this proposal.

Those speaking against the proposal highlighted that MET's relationship with the Methodist Church was the result of a coming together of CIM (Conservative Evangelicals in Methodism), MRF (Methodist Revival Fellowship), and Dunamis to form Headway (MET's predecessor). The aims and objectives had been to increase the profile of evangelicalism in the Methodist Church. This proposed amendment would mean that office holders on the Executive would no longer be required to be members of the Methodist Church and so the influence of MET would be weakened. They believed the wording of the proposal was imprecise and could result in people from other Christian denominations joining MET and becoming inappropriately influential, particularly if they were co-opted on to the Executive Committee. One contributor believed that

any new Committee could change the temporary amendment to a permanent one; this person also noted MET's evangelical witness within the Methodist Church and listed MET members in strategic positions – three District Chairs and the Vice President – along with Cliff College, and was concerned that the organization could move to the fringes and not reflect or represent its true membership. This was felt to be a retrograde step.

Those speaking to support the resolution, which they believed was not a retrograde step because it would allow the organization to move forward, explained that they and others – who had served the Methodist Church for many years – had felt disenfranchised by the GILUU resolutions; some found themselves in an untenable position because they would be unable to accept or preach Methodist doctrines and therefore would be abandoned, having to leave or be asked to leave. It was very important to them to have MET's support in these turbulent times, especially as some did not recognise real evangelical influence elsewhere in the Methodist Church, and particularly not in Ministerial Formation and Theology. They realised that some MET Executive Committee members might decide to resign post-Conference 2021 and this amendment would protect the Committee and provide a logical handover to others who would continue the current stance, also allowing any members who leave the Methodist Church to remain in MET and find fellowship there. Two of the contributors then suggested that the amendment wording in the resolution be clarified with a view to re-presenting it at the next AGM.

The two Vice Chairs also commented that the proposal had been put to the members to safeguard the future of MET and was entirely to provide a means of support to members through enabling a smoother transition period. The Four All's of Methodism and the Arminian belief within it continued to be acknowledged by MET, with the Evangelical Alliance's basis of faith as a form of reference. One of the Vice Chairs then indicated that the trustees would be open to a fresh resolution being put to the AGM in Spring 2021.

A vote was taken on the Special Resolution which showed 67 FOR and 37 AGAINST. This worked out as 64% FOR and 36% AGAINST. The Constitution requires a two-thirds majority in favour for a Special Resolution to be passed (66.6%). Thus the vote was not carried.

In conclusion, the Chair stated that trustees would welcome an alternative resolution being brought to the next AGM and would be willing to facilitate this.

The meeting closed in prayer and concluded at 6.10 pm