

THE METHODIST CHURCH – NORTHAMPTON DISTRICT

Minutes of District Synod (Representative Session) held on 19 September 2026 at Servant King Church, Milton Keynes

District Chair : The Rev'd Dr SH

Synod Secretary : PS

Attendance: The Synod was held in hybrid format with 85 people on site, including 13 young people, and some 43 attending online.

1. Welcome

Revd Dr ED (Superintendent Minister) welcomed Synod to the Milton Keynes Circuit.

Revd Dr SH (Chair) welcomed everyone to a Synod which would be focussed on children and young people.

2. Worship

Rev'd NF and a group of young people from the West Oxfordshire circuit led Synod in worship.

3. Opening business

Revd KB was granted a full dispensation, and Revd MC a partial one.

Apologies had been received from 20 supernumerary ministers and lay members of the Synod.

The Chair introduced ministers new to the District, and members new to Synod.

The Secretary explained the function of the Methodist Conference, and that we would be electing representatives to go to it in 2027. Scrutineers were appointed from the Northampton Circuit.

Letters of greeting were sent to Revd MG, AL, Revd ML, Deacon SP, and Revd AW.

4. G S, Methodist Youth President

The Chair welcomed GS, the Methodist Youth President, who was just taking up her role, and asked her to challenge the District about the role of children and young people. GS talked about her calling - how some people had noticed something in her that she wasn't aware of. She asked people in groups to reflect on people who had invested time in them, and to think of young people we could tell we had noticed something in them. It was vital to listen carefully to young people without jumping to solutions – "let us finish our sentences!" was the plea from one young attendee to the Synod.

5. Action for Children

GB, fundraising officer for Action for Children, spoke of their work and thanked Methodists for their continuing support. £165 was raised in a collection.

Synod adjourned for lunch for an hour

After lunch, the young people present met separately with the Youth President, whilst Synod continued with items 6 to 10.

6. Representatives to Conference 2027

Revd KB, Revd SJ, Revd MM and Revd DS were elected as presbyteral representatives to the 2027 Conference, with Revd ND-L as reserve. JC, AF, AH, HO and PS were the only people to put themselves forward as lay representatives and were duly appointed.

7. Business

7a. Deaths: It was reported that Revd MA, and former Vice-President of Conference BT, had both died since the last Synod. The Chair gave thanks to God for their lives and prayed for their families.

7b. Appointment of Synod Secretary: Synod unanimously appointed HO as Synod Secretary. The Chair welcomed her warmly, and thanked PS equally warmly for his service as Secretary.

7c. Appointment of District Officers: Synod approved the appointment of District officers, as recorded on the District Structural Directory which is on the District website.

8. Cease to meet for worship

The District Executive recommended to the Synod that Great Milton Methodist Church, in the Oxford circuit, and Houghton-on-the-Hill Methodist Church in the Leicester Trinity circuit, cease to meet; and that Burton Latimer Methodist Church, in the East Mercia Circuit, cease to worship in their building. These recommendations were approved unanimously. The Chair offered a prayer of thanks for the mission and service of faithful Methodist people in these churches.

9. Safeguarding

SW, Regional Officer Safeguarding, explained that, after NH departure, she was now responsible for all safeguarding activities, including training. JO would be helping with administration. There would be Advanced training in five locations round the District. Those doing the training online would need to complete the elearning modules before they could book the follow-up meeting. She would be organising monthly meetings for Circuit Safeguarding Officers, and quarterly ones for Church Safeguarding Officers.

10. Reports from Conference

Rev'd MM, Rev'd JP and WJ spoke of their experience of Conference 2026. They particularly referred to discussions about Net Zero, about Assisted Dying, and about membership numbers (still falling but 43% of churches reporting signs of growth). WJ, speaking as a young person, had found Conference welcoming, motivating, empowering, connecting and inspiring, including inspiring him to initiate moves towards both a youth club and a contemporary worship service.

11. GS – second session

Synod were organised into groups, both online and in person, to discuss how to involve young people - nationally, in the District, in local churches, in the way we worship, and in technology

and science. Young people present joined some of the groups (in the church but not online) to lead us.

GS concluded by asking each member of Synod to make a commitment – a realistic one – to do something to involve young people.

12. Thanks

The Chair expressed her thanks to all those involved in Synod, particularly GS; the people of the Servant King Church and the Milton Keynes circuit; Revd NF and musicians; AV technicians; and all who had spoken.

13. Holy Communion

The Chair led us in a service of Holy Communion.

Next meeting

Spring Representative Synod – 17 April 2027 in the Peterborough circuit.