

Deferred Special Resolution

Model Trust 14(2A): Use of Methodist premises for worship by other Christian congregations

The 2019 Conference submitted a deferred special resolution (regarding a change to Model Trust 14(2A)) to the Synods, Circuit Meetings, Church Councils and to the Faith and Order and Law and Polity Committees under the terms of Standing Order 126(3).

This is a two year process, and therefore the deferred special resolution is due to come back to the Conference in 2021.

Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, some Synods were not able to meet in March 2020 and have not yet considered the deferred special resolution under SO 126(4). The Law and Polity Committee recognised this and therefore the 2020 Conference passed a resolution suspending SO 126(4) and directing those Synods to consider the issue at their first meeting of the connexional year 2020/2021. This suspending resolution only relates to SO 126(4) and does not affect the timetable for consideration of the deferred special resolution by Church Councils and Circuit Meetings under SO 126(5) and further consideration by Synods under SO 126(6). Therefore, here is the timetable which should be followed even if your Synod is not taking place this autumn:

1. Those Synods which have not yet considered the deferred special resolution should do so in autumn 2020 if possible (**SO 126(4)**).
2. Church Councils are asked to vote their approval or disapproval of the deferred special resolution in autumn 2020 (**SO 126(5)**).
3. Circuit Meetings receive the vote from each Church Council within their Circuit and vote as a Circuit Meeting early in 2021 (**SO 126(5)**).
4. Synods receive and consider report/s from the Circuit Meetings and vote as a Synod in spring 2021 (**SO 126(6)**).
5. Synods submit their reports to the Conference of 2021.

We will provide Synod Secretaries with a pro forma (listing each Circuit within that District) so that the votes from each Circuit can be recorded and submitted. We suggest that they ask superintendents to record the voting at each Church Council within their Circuit and submit these to their Synod Secretary. We will need the record of the Circuit votes, but we will not need a record of every Church Council vote (this can be held locally). We will be reporting the Synod votes to the Conference with a note of the number of Circuits voting in favour and those against in each District and we will retain records of the circuit votes for reference.

We attach a briefing paper which explains what the vote is about, for use in Synods, Circuit Meetings and Church Councils.

For ease of reference, the relevant provisions of Standing Order 126 and the text of the suspending resolution passed at the 2020 Conference are printed overleaf.

Standing Order 126

126 Special Resolutions.

(2) The consultation required before the confirmation of 'deferred special resolutions', as defined in section 2(1) of the 1976 Act, shall take place as prescribed in clauses (3) to (7) below. The provisions of clauses (3) to (7) are directory only, and no failure to comply shall of itself invalidate such confirmation if reasonable steps have been taken by or on behalf of the Secretary of the Conference to procure compliance with clause (3) and to ensure that reports actually received from the bodies consulted, or a suitable summary, are placed before the confirming Conference.

(3) Deferred special resolutions shall be submitted to the Synod of every home and overseas District, to the Circuit Meeting of every Circuit, to the Church Council of every Local Church and to the connexional committees on Faith and Order and on Law and Polity.

(4) Each Synod shall consider any deferred special resolution during the year following the passing of the resolution.

(5) Each Church Council and Circuit Meeting shall consider any such resolution in or before March in the second year following the passing of the resolution and shall report its approval or disapproval both to the Synod of the District and to the Conference.

(6) Each Synod shall in the second year following the passing of any such resolution consider the reports of the Church Councils and Circuit Meetings of the District under clause (5) above and shall, after giving its own final consideration to the resolution, report its approval or disapproval to the Conference.

(7) The connexional committees on Faith and Order and on Law and Polity shall during either or both of the two years following the passing of any such resolution consider the resolution and they shall report their approval or disapproval to the Conference in the second such year.

Resolution LP/14 (2020)

The Conference hereby suspends Standing Order 126, clause (4), until the opening of the Representative Session of the Conference of 2021 and directs that:

- (1) any deferred special resolutions adopted by the Conference of 2019 which would under that clause have been considered by the Synods before this current meeting of the Conference shall (if not already so considered) instead be so considered at their first meetings in the next connexional year; but that
- (2) any deferred special resolutions adopted by the Conference of 2020 shall be dealt with as if Standing Order 126, clause (4), were still in force.

[Editor's note: the Conference of 2020 did not pass any deferred special resolutions.]