

Headway Ireland

Associated With Methodist Evangelicals Together (MET)

Northern Ireland Charity Number 102678



2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Friday June 2nd 2023

At 7.45pm

SEYMOUR STREET METHODIST CHURCH. LISBURN

A movement of Methodists committed to prayer for revival and witness to the evangelical faith.

15, Springfort Lodge.
Dollingstown.
Craigavon
BT 66 7BE

Dear Colleagues,

We are looking forward to meeting at our AGM in person to be held in Seymour St, Methodist Church, Lisburn.

Please find included the agenda and papers relevant to the meeting.

If you have not paid your annual subscription for 2023 please note that this is now due and our Treasurer, the Rev Andrew Boucher will appreciate your payment of same. Fees are £25 for individuals and couples and £20 for those who are retired. Cheques should be made payable to Headway Ireland and sent to the above address.

If you have any item for discussion can you please inform me by Friday May 26th. We look forward to sharing in fellowship with you at the meeting.

Sincerely,

Ken Robinson (Secretary)

AGENDA.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Friday June 2nd 2023: 7.45pm

- 1) Opening Devotions
- 2) Apologies
- 3) Sympathy & Greetings
- 4) Minutes of the 2022 AGM
- 5) Matters Arising from the 2022 Minutes.
- 6) Secretary's Report
- 7) Treasurer's Report
- 8) Conference Event 2023
- 9) Election of Officers
- 10) Business and Resolutions of which notice has been received.
- 11) Review of the Agenda of Conference 2023
- 12) Date of Next Executive Committee
- 13) Any Other Business.
- 14) Prayer & Close.

Minutes of the Previous Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting for 2022 of Headway Ireland took place in Seymour Street Methodist Church Halls, Lisburn on Wednesday June 1st at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Revs David Clements (Chair) Andrew Boucher, Ken Bradley, Billy Davison, Philip Gallagher, Ken Lindsay, Ken Robinson (Secretary), Ken Todd, Ken Wilson, Mrs. Lindsay Gibson, Beulah Robinson, Misses Rhoda Baxter, Heather Boland, Messrs Edwin Coalter and Ed Tate.

David welcomed all and then read from Psalm 1. He spoke on the word, “blessed” and said those who are blessed are people who are content in God and find their fulfillment in God. They are not fulfilled by the world. Some want to fit in and compromise but the world is wicked. As Christians we have repented and are no longer in step with the world. Rather we delight in the law of the Lord.

David quoted the late Dr Billy Graham who said: God said, I believe, the matter is settled.

On the matter of sexual morality he said the Bible is clear. God’s word never changes. Those who live according to God’s word are fruitful. David asked what fruit is grown within the Methodist Church in Ireland. He also asked what treasure we can take to Heaven. His answer was: 1) The fruit of soul winning, e.g. prayer, tithing, witnessing and 2) our Christian character.

David then led the gathering in prayer.

APOLOGIES. These were received from Stephen and Hazel Baird, Brian Fletcher, Andrew Gibson, Lee Glenny, Jennifer Hartley Jim Rea, Tommy Stevenson, Robert Wallace and Tom Wilson.

SYMPATHIES. Letters had been sent to the President, Billy Davison, Aian Ferguson, and would be sent to Patricia Lindsay on the death of her sister.

GREETINGS. Letters were to be sent to Lee Glenny and Robert Wallace wishing them well in their health issues, the students leaving Edgehill, the ordinands and the incoming President.

MINUTES OF THE 2021 AGM. These were approved and signed.

MATTERS ARISING. Heather Boland spoke about the book initiative and how every minister within MCI had received a copy. David shared with the meeting about the working party which had completed their work on questions and answers that were available on the Headway Ireland website, but said the work was ongoing. Referring to the Faith and Order Report due to come to Conference it was stated that these

questions and answers should be shared with the connexion as they respond to the report's questions.

SECRETARYS'S REPORT. Agreed.

TREASURER'S REPORT. Accepted.

CONFERENCE EVENT. David shared that since the Conference strap line was living wholeheartedly the title of the Headway Conference meeting would be wholeheartedly committed to:

The Scriptures (Heather Boland),
The Gospel (David Clements),
The Church (Ken Robinson), and
The Lord (Hazel Loney).

Each person would speak for 5 minutes and then each would lead 10 minutes of prayer. All would be on zoom.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS. All were reelected.

OTHER BUSINESS. Ken Robinson spoke about the need to take Headway out into the connexion. Heather said we were in a battle for hearts and minds. There was broad support for this and it was agreed that at the next executive meeting plans would be drawn up to further this.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING. Thursday 29th September 2022 at 10am.

REVIEW OF CONFERENCE AGENDA. Lindsay Gibson shared with the meeting her experience as a leader at Soul Mates. One of the female leaders had come out the previous November and her girl friend was also a leader. Lindsay had spoken to Gillian Gilmore and to Heather Morris and had enquired had there been a change in policy. Heather replied that she had taken the decision to let this lady serve rather than lead but Lindsay countered by saying in the eyes of the young people attending Soul Mates there was no difference. She also asked can she with confidence attend any future IMYC events or will this policy continue?

After discussion David then introduced the Faith and Order report to be brought to Conference 2022. He read out sections of the report and it was noted that when the report referred to the as yet unseen paper on Human Sexuality, it said, "*Whilst reaffirming the Methodist Church's historic position; acknowledges that faithful Christians rooted in Scripture might validly hold different views on human sexuality.*" It was agreed that the word validly should not have been inserted in the report because Headway Ireland members could not agree with this statement.

The discussion noted the possibility of a split within MCI or of evangelical members drifting away and the church becoming so weakened it would never recover. Questions were asked: had the committee adhered to the terms of reference and if so, what is the report from the world church and their attitude to Human Sexuality. Does MCI believe in absolute truth? Is the membership of the Faith and Order Committee a fair representation of the theological spectrum within MCI? Is the committee an honest broker that can proceed with this?

The reference in the report to the 2011 Pastoral Guidelines was a misquote because they do not say what the report alleges. Membership in the MCI is open to all irrespective of sexual orientation but the guidelines do not say sexuality is not a barrier to membership.

There was a great deal of unease within the meeting because of the report. David said that within the following few days he would E mail various members of Conference with a view to agreeing a response to the report.

The meeting ended with a time of prayer and the grace being said by all.

Secretary's Report

As the 2023 Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland approaches, it appears there is an increasing unease within the connexion as to the direction of travel by the Methodist Church in Ireland. Headway Ireland has sought to stand for Biblical truth and in the year since the last AGM has presented our views consistently through letter, conversation, and Methodist Newsletter articles.

Much of the year has been taken up with the ongoing debate within the church on the subject of human sexuality. Our Spring Gathering was addressed in person by the Rev Dr David Hull from Bristol. He is the chair of Methodist Evangelicals Together and we were wonderfully enriched and enlightened by his address. At the end of the night, copies of his publication, *The Runaway Train* were distributed free of charge to any who wanted them. In it he traces the steps taken by successive conferences of the Methodist Church in GB leading eventually to their decision to authorise and permit same sex relationships within the membership of that church. David's ministry and his book serve as a warning to the Methodist Church in Ireland.

During the year the chair of Headway Ireland, the Rev Dr David Clements visited Ballynanny Church and spoke about the debate within Methodism. This Headway District event was well attended by representatives from as far away as Enniskillen and was a good evening as well as positive publicity for Headway. It is our hope that more District events can take place.

Headway Ireland has responded during the year to the Faith and Order Committee. A letter was sent to them about the 3 Bible Studies on Christian Unity which the committee published at Christmas when they invited circuits to use these studies. While agreeing with the need to preserve Christian Unity the letter from Headway shared our disappointment that the subject of Unity was used as a cover to argue for same sex relationships and at the lack of Biblical references to justify the arguments presented in these studies.

Members of Headway attended the Encounter gatherings held in Dublin, Cork and Fivemiletown and online. Those who did availed of the opportunity to share in the feedback that had been requested. The Faith and Order committee were left in no doubt that individual members were not happy with the format and content of these Encounter meetings.

The need for prayer is evident. Headway Ireland prayer meetings have been held throughout the year and we are grateful to God for His presence and guidance. While attendance at these zoom prayer meetings has been encouraging it is such a blessing to see more of our members participating and we hope in the year ahead, that you will be able to join us. Remember the old saying: Much prayer, much blessing, little prayer,

little blessing, no prayer, no blessing. As our church faces such momentous decisions prayer is vital.

The Headway Ireland Conference meeting will be held on zoom on Tuesday June 6th at 8pm. We are looking forward to hearing from Bishop David McClay when he speaks on the subject of *Sharing Christ in a Broken World*. We hope you will be able to join us. Zoom details are found on the invitation to that meeting sent separately from these details.

In closing, I want to thank you for your membership of Headway Ireland and to our chair Dr David Clements for his leadership. Headway Ireland plays a hugely significant part in the life of our church. Please keep praying and we hope you will be able to join us in Lisburn for our AGM and then on zoom for our Conference meeting.

Sincerely,

Ken Robinson (Secretary)