

# Headway Ireland

Associated With Methodist Evangelicals Together (MET)

**Northern Ireland Charity Number 102678**



## **2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Friday May 31st**

At 7.45pm

**SEYMOUR STREET METHODIST CHURCH. LISBURN**

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

**Headway Ireland**  
**[Associated with Methodist Evangelicals Together (MET)]**

**Northern Ireland Charity Number 102678**

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

20May 2024

Dear Colleagues,

We are looking forward to meeting at our AGM in person to be held in Seymour St, Methodist Church, Lisburn, on Friday 31 May 2024 at 7.45pm.

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 May 31<sup>st</sup> : 7.45pm**

- 1) Opening Devotions
- 2) Apologies:
- 3) Sympathy & Greetings:
- 4) Minutes of the 2023 AGM
- 5) Matters Arising from the 2023 Minutes.
- 6) Secretary's Report
- 7) Treasurer's Report
- 8) Conference Event 2024: Bishop Ken Clarke on zoom.
- 9) Election of Officers
- 10) Business and Resolutions of which notice has been received.
- 11) Date of Next Executive Committee:
- 12) Review of the Agenda of Conference 2024:
- 13) Any Other Business.
- 14) Prayer & Close.

The Annual General Meeting for 2023 of Headway Ireland took place in Seymour Street Methodist Church Halls, Lisburn on Friday June 2nd at 8.00pm.

PRESENT: Revs David Clements (Chair), Andrew Boucher, Ken Bradley, Roy Cooper, Philip Gallagher, Derek Johnston, Jim Rea, Ken Robinson (Secretary), Tommy Stevenson, Ken Wilson, Mrs. Hazel Baird, Lindsay Gibson, Lynda Neilands, Beulah Robinson, Misses Lorna Douglas, Rhoda Baxter, Heather Boland, Messrs Marshall Allen and Steven Baird.

David welcomed all and then read from John 12. He had 2 thoughts:

- a) When the Gentile Greeks approached Philip they said, *"Sir we would see Jesus"*. David said it was a privilege for us as individuals to help people see Jesus, and that Headway existed in order to help people find Jesus and then become like Jesus.
- b) David referred to the reply of Jesus when he said *"Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies it remains a single grain"*. He asked are we being fruitful as followers of Jesus. The temptation is to love life here and to seek to be liked, popular and accepted. He said culture had changed and the way we as followers of Jesus lived in former days had been accepted but now faithful discipleship drew criticism. He stated the church of Jesus Christ has not moved but the world has. If we give in then we are in danger of losing our life, but if we stand firm then when Jesus returns we will be rewarded.

David then led in prayer.

APOLOGIES: These were received from, Philip Bridge, Billy Davison, Aian Ferguson, Andrew Gibson, Lee Glenny, Jennifer Hartley, Osmond Mulligan, Margaret and Ed Tate, Brian Sweeney, Robert Wallace and the President Designate.

SYMPATHIES: These had been extended to our chair on the passing of his mother and greetings to David Turtle as he prepared to become President of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

MINUTES OF THE 2022 AGM: These were approved and signed.

MATTERS ARISING: None

SECRETARYS'S REPORT: Agreed.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Accepted. Roy Cooper asked should Headway consider sponsoring a student to attend an evangelical conference where that student might be enriched and blessed. The chair said the Executive would consider this.

CONFERENCE EVENT: Bishop David McClay had agreed to speak on zoom on the topic *Sharing Christ with a Broken World* on Tuesday June 6<sup>th</sup> at 8pm.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: All were reelected.

REVIEW OF CONFERENCE AGENDA: Human Sexuality.

The chair reported that he had been told the Faith and Order Committee would not bring any report of substance on the subject of human sexuality to the 2023 Methodist Conference. This led to a long debate in which many members contributed.

Some of the comments included;

- a) The F & O Committee has no appetite for radical change.
- b) As believers living under the authority of Scripture, we are convinced that the Bible forbids all same sex sexual practice.
- c) Some within the F & O committee believe that committed gay relationships are not radical. Leadership is open to these people.
- d) The Blue Book of 2022 said that individual circuits should decide who is eligible for leadership, but this will result in a piece meal approach.

e) We need clarity. Sex between same sex couples is against what the Bible teaches.

f) The MCI is in danger of doing as the MCB did and that is watching as the train runs away and before long it is too late to stop it.

g) The Encounter meetings were softening the connexion but for what?

h) Are our ministers asked do we believe and preach our doctrines as before because if MCI approves same sex relationships many will be unable to?

i) Does MCI still have a concept of sin?

j) What is the current teaching of MCI about sex? Should conference be asked?

k) Is the covenant with the Church of Ireland in danger if MCI approves same sex relationships?

l) Given that F & O has been debating this for 10 years, what is the process for the years to come?

m) Can F & O share with the connexion what the response to the Encounter gatherings has been?

n) Good things are still happening within MCI. God is still at work.

#### REVIEW OF CONFERENCE AGENDA: Church Growth.

It was noted that while a study of church growth within MCI was welcome, there was no point in bringing new people in through the front door if the back door remained open. In the past connexional year 5 churches had closed and 5 ministers had decided to leave the pastoral ministry. Were those who so choose ever asked why?

#### FUTURE DATES:

Zoom prayer meeting on September 12<sup>th</sup>.  
Executive Committee to be arranged.

There being no other business Ken Robinson closed in prayer.

## Secretary's Report

The annual conference of the Methodist church in Ireland will be held a few days after our AGM. Many issues will be discussed including the question of human sexuality. The working party set up by the conference has been discussing this for many years and this year their deliberations will be shared with us. Because of that, this conference will be the most important for many years.

The subject of human sexuality has dominated the thinking of our executive committee throughout the year. Every meeting has had an extended time of discussion about this and our regular prayer meetings held on zoom have included the forthcoming conference as we have sought the Lord and pleaded with Him for mercy, wisdom and guidance. These prayer times have been wonderfully refreshing and we encourage our members to join us at the next prayer meeting as we seek the Lord.

Members will remember that in a recent copy of the Methodist Newsletter a photograph appeared of two Methodist Ministers standing behind a banner which suggested the Methodist Church in Ireland was supportive of gay pride. A delegation from Headway met with the secretary of Conference and the President in response. Questions were asked and assurances sought.

Our chair, David Clements and one of our members, Lynda Neilands contributed to the series of five podcasts posted on the connexional web site. Their podcasts were excellent and we congratulate them and trust their contributions will continue to enlighten and educate all who watch them.

Copies of ***The Runaway Train***, written by David Hull, chair of MET were given to every minister in the active work when they attended the Recall Conference in Sligo in January. Many of the recipients were glad to receive them.

The Headway web site has been expanded to include resources specific to the sexuality debate.



Judge David Turner, originally from Londonderry but now resident in London was the speaker at our Spring Gathering. He spoke about ***Challenges to the Word of God today***. In a superb address he spoke with clarity and passion about the LGBTQ+ movement and how the church can respond.

These are perilous times for the Methodist Church. The influence and prayers of Headway members is vital. Non members have contacted the officers on occasion to express their appreciation of the lead Headway is giving. As we approach our AGM we trust the Lord will continue to anoint all who belong to Headway and that the work done for Him will be blessed.