

**STIPEND REVIEW COMMITTEE 2017**

**Report of a Meeting held on 16 January 2017 at Essex Hall**

**Attendance** – Dorothy Hewerdine (GA President), Rev Daniel Costley (MSG Chair), Derek McAuley (Chief Officer), Rev Jim Corrigan (Ministerial Fellowship representative).

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Peter Hanley (Honorary Treasurer) who had provided views in writing.

**2. Declaration of interests**

The position of Rev Daniel Costley and Rev Jim Corrigan as Ministers in receipt of stipend was noted.

**3. Views, Recommendations and Comments**

No written comments had been received, however, it was the view of the Ministerial Fellowship that greater emphasis should be given that the scales were a minimum and congregations should be encouraged to pay more.

**4. Report of Previous Meeting – 18 January 2016**

Noted

**5. Stipend and Scales**

Background Information was received from the Chief Officer

Inflation

The latest available figures from the Office of National Statistics for November 2016 (released 13 December 2016) were as follows (compared to November 2015):

CPI was the main UK measure of consumer domestic price inflation. It has been agreed that CPIH will become the preferred measure of inflation from March 2017. CPIH is the measure which includes the costs owner occupiers' face in owning, maintaining and living in their own homes. The Retail Prices Index is a longstanding measure.

Consumer Prices Index (CPI)	+1.2%	(+0.1%)
CPIH	+1.4%	(+0.4%)
Retail Prices Index (RPI) All items	+2.2%	(+1.1%)

The Bank of England Inflation report in November 2016 - central forecast is that inflation will rise to 2.7% in 2017 and 2018, falling to 2.5% in 2019.

Wages and salaries

Average Weekly Earnings from Office of National Statistics (published 14 December 2016):

Average weekly earnings regular pay	+2.6%	(+2.4%)
Average weekly earnings total pay	+2.5%	(+2.0%)

Other denominations.

**Church of England: from 1 April 2016**

National Stipend Benchmark: £25,637 (1.5% increase)

**United Reformed Church: from 1 January 2017**

£25,572 (1.3% increase)

**Congregational Federation: from 1 January 2017**

£24,720 (2% increase)

**Methodist Church from 1 September 2016**

£23,184 (1.4% increase)

**Baptist Union Home mission stipend: from 1 January 2017**

£22,500 (1.35% increase)

**Formulation of Scales**

In 2016 the Committee recommended a 4% increase for the second year and served notice that another 4% was likely in 2017 to progress towards an aspiration to reach parity with the Congregational Federation.

The Committee had not received any views on this aspiration and endorsed it as the way forward.

There had also been no views received on whether and how the move from probationary to full status might be recognised through the stipend levels. It was noted that probationary ministers often brought extensive life skills to their ministry which should be recognised. It was felt that whilst the move from probationary to full status should be recognised more fully by the General Assembly it was not appropriate to reflect this in the recommended stipend levels. The current bandings were, therefore, confirmed.

The Committee acknowledged that the contribution of Ministers and Lay Pastors could not be recognised simply in monetary terms and was also aware of the continuing pressure on congregational income. Having taken these matters in account, the recommendation is, as forecast last year, a 4% increase for all categories as set out below (adjusted to ensure ability to pay in 12 equal amounts). Assuming inflation level increases in other denominations, the levels would move closer to the target aspiration, and have been reached for the 10yr plus band. This proposal had the support of the Honorary Treasurer.

**Scales from 1/1/18**

	<b>Current from 1/1/17</b>	<b>New from 1/1/18 4%</b>
<b>Ministers</b>		
yrs 1 - 5	22,476	23,376
yrs 6 - 10	23,172	24,096
yrs 10 plus	24,144	25,152
<b>Lay Pastors</b>	19,704	20,496

These scales are the minimum not recommended figures and where finances permit congregations should consider if they can increase the stipend. They are also encouraged to provide a higher stipend when a minister has additional training, experience, or the ministry setting is particularly challenging.

As the situation of Approved Lay Leaders varies greatly the determination of any compensation is a local matter.

## **6. Manse Allowance**

A report was received from Rev Martin Whitell and the Chief Officer, who were thanked for their considerable work. A detailed comparison with levels of privately rented accommodation in each area was presented with a recommendation of a new five band system.

It was noted that the current levels had been in place since 2008.

There was general agreement that the key issue that had been highlighted was the disparity between London and the rest of the country. The differences within districts were as wide as those between districts and it was therefore felt that banding outside the LDPA area could create anomalies. How the individual circumstances of ministers and congregations could be factored into any assessment was also considered to be problematic.

It was acknowledged that an increase was required and agreed that 5% increases in all rates be implemented for each of the next two years. It was also agreed that a band for London postcodes plus Richmond be set in which the LDPA level would be the minimum and the actual level be subject to negotiation between congregation and Minister, recognising individual circumstances. The new levels will be:

	<b>Current from 1/1/17</b>	<b>New from 1/1/18</b>
Provincial	6,264	6,576
LDPA area	9,000	9,444
London postcodes plus Richmond	9,000 minimum	9,444 minimum

If no manse is available and the minister therefore lives in rental accommodation this should also be the responsibility of the congregation, not the individual, as a manse allowance may not cover actual costs.

## **7. Resettlement Grants and Removal Costs**

No change is recommended. Currently £3,700 is payable in addition to removal contractors' charges. The resettlement grant is taxable and subject to NIC unless it is payable against actual bills provided the Minister. For further information consult HM Revenue & Customs booklet 480.

Where a personal vehicle is used for removals, mileage allowances should be claimed at General Assembly rate. If a removal contractor is used, the claim must be substantiated by receipts and the charge be the lowest of three quotations.

**8. Mileage Allowance:**

Mileage was in line with HMRC rules. Having compared the position of pedal cycles with other churches it was agreed to increase the level to 20p/mile.

Cars: 45p/mile

Motorcycles: 24p/mile.

Pedal cycles: 20p/mile

Public Transport rate 30p/mile (Reimbursed at actual cost)

**9. Pulpit Supply**

No change is recommended with current rates confirmed:

£50 plus expenses which is a minimum rate and if congregations wish to pay more they are encouraged to do so. It is recommended that special fees should be negotiated for special occasions as Anniversary Services, where additional preparation is required. Fees should always be offered and claimed in full.

**10. Other Business:**

The committee noted that the Unite Faith Workers' Branch were hoping to establish a Unitarian group and were meeting during the Annual Meetings and a request for involvement in the stipend process may follow. It should be noted however that the recommendations of the Stipend Review Committee are not an agreed level of remuneration for Ministers as the GA is not an employer; specific levels of remuneration are the subject of individual negotiations between congregation and Minister or Lay Pastor.

The Committee was also informed that Rev Nicky Jenkins was the incoming President of the Ministerial Fellowship.

**11. Date of Next Meeting**

To be arranged in January 2018.

**12. Request for Views, Recommendations and Comments:**

In advance of next year's review, the Committee invites and encourages congregations and Ministers to submit views and recommendations regarding the matters covered in this report. In order that such submissions may be reviewed before the next meeting, please send any such communications to the Chief Officer to arrive **by 30 November 2017**.

**Approved by the GA Executive Committee on 20 February 2017.**