The **Methodist** Church

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The Revd Peter Timms
16 Manor Road
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9th June 2017

Dear Mr Timms

I write further to your letter dated 4 May 2017 containing your summary of the issue, which I hope to be able to address in this letter.

I think it is important to note that Alan Bolton's role as the Complaints Worker provides him with no authority to dismiss any member of a complaints team or to amend the decision of a complaints team. Alan has specific responsibilities under Part 11 of Standing Orders as the "relevant connexional Team member." These responsibilities include the selection of connexional complaints teams chosen from the connexional Complaints Panel, which is appointed annually by the Conference. Alan merely administers the process and offers guidance on the procedure. He has no say in any of the decisions made by either local complaints officers or complaints teams.

As you are aware, there was no right of appeal against the decision of the complaints team to dismiss your complaints. The process under Part 11 in considering the complaint you made has been completed and no person or body has the authority to set aside the decision of the complaints team. This includes the Secretary of the Conference.

I note that Alan has mentioned to you Standing Order 1155 but upon careful reflection I am not sure that this offers you a way forward that will address the points you have been raising. If Standing Order 1155 were utilised, it would involve three members of the connexional Reconciliation Group meeting with you in order to listen to your concerns about Part 11, explore with you whether there is any way of resolving these concerns, and make recommendations for any improvements to the process. Standing Order 1155 is *not* a mechanism for appeal against the decisions made by the Revd Dr David Chapman as local complaints officer or the complaints team. The decisions made by the local complaints officer and complaints team would remain regardless of the conclusions of the connexional Reconciliation Group. The Standing Order is very clear that the group cannot make any decisions on the merit of the complaint and would not be engaging with or reviewing your original complaint. The group would be restricted to considering the manner in which the complaints process was undertaken. I am not therefore sure that SO 1155

Your concerns

I do not believe that there is any further support that can be offered to you as the process under Part 11 has run to completion. I recognise that you have found the outcome of this process to be deeply unsatisfactory and I am sorry for the anxiety that this has caused you.

I am aware that you have indicated that you might want to make complaints against the local complaints officer and/or members of the complaints team. You will be aware that where complaints are made against a person carrying out responsibilities as a local complaints officer or member of a complaints team, Standing Order 1103(6) applies. Complaints can only be made on the grounds that the person concerned acted in bad faith or that their conduct constituted abuse. You will need to clearly set down in writing what you allege the bad faith to have been by each of the individuals against whom you are making a complaint. It will then be for the Secretary of the Conference to consider the complaint on the grounds of bad faith and to agree whether or not the complaint may be made.

In light of what I have said about the end of the Part 11 process in respect of your original complaint, it is no longer appropriate for Alan to continue to respond to your letters and emails. Obviously if you write making further complaints then these shall be responded to in accordance with the Part 11 process. All other correspondence shall be placed on the file but not responded to.

I sincerely hope that you are able to find a sense of peace and reconciliation by other means.

Yours sincerely

L. Wilkins

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