# M7 Access to local preaching and worship leading training materials

The East AngliaDistrict Synod, Representative Session (Present: 106; Voting: 99 for, 1 against) notes that the East Anglia District includes Circuits where broadband speeds are very low. As a result, such Circuits are finding that the recruitment of new local preachers and leaders of worship is being made more difficult by the fact that access to the new training materials can only be gained online. This raises issues of equality of accessibility to learning.

The District therefore requests that the Conference directs the Ministries Committee to review the ways in which the materials can be made more accessible for those without reliable broadband, portable devices or who cannot easily work on a screen.

**Reply**

The Conference thanks the East Anglia District Synod for its memorial. The development of *Worship: Leading and Preaching* as an online course has had a number of benefits in enabling flexible learning and appealing to a number of different learning styles. At the same time, it was recognised when work began on the course that there might be difficulties for some learners with little previous experience of online learning and for others living in areas with slow broadband speeds. The Local Preachers and Worship Leaders Studies Board is addressing the former through the commissioning of a pre-study module preparing the learner for the experience of online learning. In the case of slow broadband speeds, whilst improvements may be expected in the future in the roll out of fast broadband, a number of steps have already been taken to mitigate its effects. For example, an enhancement in summer 2016 has already greatly improved the performance of the system when watching video material for those with slow broadband speeds; the video material is also available on a USB flash drive (‘memory stick’) specifically for people for whom online access is difficult; audio and written transcriptions of video material are already available; and a print function is available for page and chapter printing so that sections of the material can be printed out locally as required. It should be noted that the costs of a published print version of the new course would be prohibitive and the course is currently offered free at the point of use. Indeed a print version would not contain a number of resources key to fulfilment of the learning outcomes. *Worship: Leading and Preaching* was always envisioned as a course which would continue to evolve and a mechanism already exists through the Local Preachers and Worship Leaders Studies Board for feedback to be received and reflected upon as improvements are made, including issues of use and accessibility.

The Conference, therefore, declines the memorial but directs the Local Preachers and Worship Leaders Studies Board to take account of it in the future development of the course.