

Reports for the Spring Synod 2021

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Candidates

The District Candidates' Committee gathered (thanks to the wonders of technology) on 16th January, and were delighted to meet three candidates for presbyteral ministry, all of whom are a credit to their Circuits, currently involved in lay ministry or preaching. After a tiring-but-uplifting day (and a lot of hard work by the candidates) we were very pleased to recommend all three to go forward to the Candidates Selection Committee (Connexional interviews) – meeting from 20th-26th March. Outcomes should be known soon afterwards.

The Candidates are:

Sincere Makunde (Leicester West Circuit)

Rachael Prince (West Oxfordshire Circuit)

Paulette Tedd (Milton Keynes Circuit)

Please remember in your prayers all three of these who have faithfully set out to explore God's call, and their families also over the coming months, as they prayerfully work through the next steps of their vocational journey.

I wish to express thanks to our District Candidates Committee, and our deputising chair for the day, Revd Nicola Martin-Beck. The committee have worked extremely hard, with utmost care and diligence, and spent many hours reading reams of paperwork. This year, the entire process was conducted online, via *Zoom*. This was a technical conundrum aided wonderfully by Claire Handley, District administrator, and her son James. We were also thankful for the ministry of our chaplain for the day, Revd Kim Shorley.

Several members of the committee are stepping down this year, and so we offer our heartfelt thanks to Mrs Stella Bristow, Deacon Richard Beckett, Revd Lin Francis and Revd Saidu Kanu for their years of service.

Candidating is the process by which a member who feels called to ordained ministry is recommended by the church to begin training. It begins with the inner call of God, often brought into focus by the encouragement of friends or fellow church members. Vocational discernment continues in conversation with a minister and superintendent. During the official process, the church tests the candidate in various ways, wanting to bring out the very best in them, and to see which areas will need developing in the period of training. The process is thorough and rigorous, designed to make sure that all who enter training are truly called to ordination in the Methodist Church, and as ready as possible for the ministry that lies ahead.

The candidating process for next year begins soon (candidates *must* have requested an application form by the end of August in order to be eligible to candidate in the year 2021/22). I would like to emphasise that the more support a candidate is given at an early stage, the better it is for everyone. Candidates' Support Days from the Learning Network for potential candidates begin in July. But there's no need to wait until then before starting exploration. If you think you have a potential candidate in your Circuit (or might be a candidate!), **please contact me as soon as possible** to enable them to begin to engage fully with the process.

Rev'd Andrew Murphy
District Candidates' Secretary.

Carbon Reduction

The annual property returns ask, "What work has the church undertaken in the last year [...] to reduce energy consumption in line with the Connexional recommendations 'Hope in God's Future - Christian Discipleship in the context of Climate Change'?" Similar to previous years, I've counted every church whose comment implied they had done something constructive, then summarised the results per Circuit.

Clearly it was an unusual year, and understandably the second half was uppermost in the minds of those completing the schedules – there were several comments along the lines of 'church building closed'. Despite three zero scores, energy consumption in all our church buildings probably reduced:

Northampton	64%
Wantage and Abingdon	63%
Hinckley	55%
...	
Market Harborough	0%
Melton Mowbray	0%
Peterborough	0%

Inspired and assisted by our District Green Champions (on the Young Leaders Scheme), our intent to become an Eco District is registered. Together we compiled a District Environmental Policy, subsequently approved by the District Executive.

The following table contains items from 2020 property returns in our District. For this to have maximum impact, please would readers inform others for inspiration. I'm happy to put people in touch so that experiences can be shared and built upon.

air source heat pumps installed battery energy storage value proven building fully insulated cooker hood installed and extractor fan replaced door replaced/closer adjusted double glazing fitted gas and electricity saving promoted gas and electricity usage monitored heating controls replaced/resited heating replaced/turned down	instant hot water boiler installed LED lighting/fittings/timers/sensors installed recycling increased and waste reduced roof/window repaired to combat damp smart meters fitted supplier ethics vetted tap adjusted tree funded nearby to replace one cut down walking/car sharing encouraged water butts purchased
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Thank you for everything you've done to benefit our environment.

Howard Warrener

District Advocate for Carbon Reduction

Children and Young People

'It has certainly been made clear in the past months that nothing can replace the valuable connections made in person [with young people] and one on one'
(Grace Sherriff, Young Leaders Scheme Participant, Peterborough Circuit).

There is no doubt that it has been an immensely challenging time for children and young people since the COVID-19 pandemic reached the United Kingdom in March 2020. Throughout the pandemic the breath of issues that children and young people have experienced is vast including bereavement, mental health issues (anxiety, depression and paranoia), isolation, loneliness and sleep problems.

Despite social media enabling young people to keep connected, the pressure of friends and influencers displaying their 'perfect lockdown lifestyle' has had damaging affects adding to mental health problems and self esteem issues.

Studying has become harder with ongoing school, college and university demands combined with difficulties of working online, due to limited access of electronic devices and home internet. Uncertainty around exams and grades has been a huge problem. In addition, maintaining existing friendships and developing new ones has been extremely challenging.

Furthermore, various opportunities for both socialisation and career building have been postponed or cancelled and goalposts have moved constantly. Children and young people have suffered boredom, and some have had to live through overcrowded homes and complex home lives. And of course, young adults have also faced unemployment.

However, throughout the pandemic, children and young people have shown strength and resilience to not let it defeat them. The Methodist Church, and more specifically the Northampton District is working hard to support children and young people in the best way possible.

3 Generate

29th – 31st October, 2021

3Generate is the National Youth Assembly for 8-23's. As restrictions begin to lift, planning for 3Generate 2021 has begun and a cautious and adaptable approach is being taken to put the event together. The event will happen in one of three different ways depending on restrictions at the time of the event.

Scenario A: Full resident event at the NEC.

Scenario B: Hybrid event – only groups with a travel time outside a two-hour radius of the event venue will be offered accommodation on-site.

Scenario C: Fully on-line, virtual 3Generate event.

The planning team will make a decision about how 3Generate will look this year in June 2021 and regular updates can be found on the 3Generate page of The Methodist Church website.

Check out 3Generate on The Methodist Church website: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/children-youth-family-ministry/3generate/>

Acts 29: District Youth Event

Every year the Northampton District aims to host a youth event for 8-23 year olds from Churches and Circuits in the District. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, Acts 29 was cancelled at short notice last year in April 2020. Currently, due to ongoing restrictions with large gatherings, a new date for 2021 has not yet been decided.

Check the Northampton District website for updates:
<https://www.northamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk>

Young Leaders Scheme

The Young Leaders Scheme enables 16-23 year olds to be employed by their Methodist Church or Circuit for 3 hours a week for one year. The scheme aims to empower young leaders.

Our current 2020-21 cohort has eight passionate young leaders working on a variety of projects including children's, family and youth work, social media and communications, diabetes awareness and green issues.

As part of each young leader's journey, they attend three away days (currently taking place online) which aim to develop leadership skills, create a space to share fellowship and seek to deepen faith together.

If you would like to find out more about the Young Leaders Scheme, contact Oliver McAllister (details below) or check out the Young Leaders Scheme section of the Northampton District website: <https://www.northamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk/young-people/young-leaders-scheme/>

'Like' the Young Leaders Scheme page on Facebook!

Youth Zoom Network

In April 2020, in response to the pandemic, the Northampton District created a new online community for 16-23 year olds from across the District. Initially online gatherings took place weekly before moving to fortnightly in September.

The sessions are made up of fun games, quizzes and focussed discussions around current topics. Over the past year, discussions have taken place around the themes of guerrilla gardening, ethical eating, poverty, climate change, social media, #BlackLivesMatter, gambling, resilience, pioneer ministry, evangelism and LGBTQ+. The Youth President, Phoebe Parkin, hosted a discussion around the possibilities of what Church could look like.

Children, Youth & Families Workers

The Northampton District is blessed with dedicated volunteers and paid workers engaging with children and young people in a variety of ways including Messy Church, Girls Brigade, Boys Brigade, Children's groups and Youth groups.

St. Paul the Apostle provides us with words of encouragement in the book of Philippians.

'I can do all this through him who gives me strength' (Philippians 4:13).

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

We thank you for the diversity of children and young people that we have in our District. We ask that more children and young people come to know you.

We ask for your wisdom and guidance in supporting those working with children and young people as we emerge from the pandemic.

When we are uncertain of the way ahead, give us guidance, and when we feel discouraged give us fresh inspiration.

By your grace, equip, enable, and enthuse us, so that we may faithfully walk the way of Christ, and finish what we have started.

Day after day, year after year, you are there to hold onto us.

Day after day, year after year, help us to hold onto you, by the grace of Christ.

Amen.

Find Out More

If you are interested in finding out more about the opportunities for children and young people in the Northampton District, please contact Oliver McAllister using the details below.

Check out the Young People section of the Northampton District website:

<https://www.northamptonmethodistdistrict.org.uk/young-people/>

Oliver McAllister

Young Leaders Scheme Coordinator

Ecumenical

The District Ecumenical Officers (DEOs) have considered progress being made to fulfil the ecumenical priorities established in the District Mission Action plan. We reflected upon the stalling of An Methodist Anglican Covenant process, noting that there was a difference between progress at grass roots level to that at higher levels. Ecumenism continues to work well in local situations responding to specific community need. Progress continues to be made in partnerships and witness with other churches and denominations. We noted that a higher emphasis is needed to encourage inter-faith relationships.

A survey of Circuits has been made to identify monetary contributions being made to varying ecumenical groupings. This is to ensure that we are fulfilling our commitments as set in standing orders. County Ecumenical bodies (Churches Together) and the County Ecumenical Officers have a key role in enabling effective response to local need through good partnership working. The DEOs, and many other colleagues, work well with these groups and considering how best to maintain those relationships.

Many aspects of ecumenical witness have been impacted by C-19. Town carol services, Remembrance events, walks of witness, etc. have been cancelled. Ever resilient and resourceful, a great deal of creativity has been shown to enable witness to take place on-line or in new ways. There is a feeling of optimism about this and a note that many more people have engaged with them. 'Mixed economy' has become the buzz phrase as plans are made for future events to incorporate elements of traditional physical meeting and alongside digital engagement. Partnership working has continued to make impact through Food Banks, Christian Against Poverty, and Pastoring.

All denominations have felt the impact of C-19 in terms of church attendance and finance constraint. This is eased by the growth in on-line participation, the faithfulness of congregants to continue to make offerings, and a reduction in utility costs. The impact has, perhaps, been felt most clearly in rural communities. The DEOs are committed to developing practices, policies, and frameworks to enable effective presence to be maintained through ecumenical co-operation.

Churches Together in England have prepared A Flexible Framework for Local Unity in Mission. This considers the broad spectrum of ways of co-working. The range of working agreements, partnerships, and constitutional agreements (LEPs) give opportunity for best structures to be adopted depending on the local situation. 'Ecumenical Places of Welcome' is a long-standing option for denominations to meet and worship in place.

We have approved the Model Governing Documents for St. Andrews Church Leicester Forest East and the Methodist Church Leicester Forest East in the Leicester West Circuit.

We offer our prayers and congratulations to Rev'd Helen Cameron on being elected as the next Moderator of the Free Church Group.

*Rev'd Andrew Farrington
Lead District Ecumenical Officer*

Finance & Grants

At the end of February 2021, the accounts for the year ended 31st August 2020 have not been independently examined, but any necessary amendments will not affect the budget which is set out below. The budget for 2021-22 was presented to the Circuit Treasurers at their meeting in November 2020 and agreed by the District Executive in December 2020.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a massive impact on the activities in the District and expenditure from the General Fund was £28,500 less than expected when the revised budget was agreed 12 months earlier. Therefore, our reserves have increased by that amount to £37,799. Our reserves policy requires us to hold £20,000 in reserves and therefore, the District Executive has agreed that the excess reserves should be used to reduce the circuit assessments in 2021-22.

The uncertainty created by the pandemic continues to make it difficult to accurately predict expenditure during the current year (2020-21) and the following year. It has been assumed that expenditure will be significantly less than anticipated last year, but will be greater than it was during 2019-20. This is due to the restrictions imposed upon us, together with savings that will result from the lessons learned during lockdown. The use of technology, particularly Zoom, should result in more economical working in the future. The revised budget for 2020-21 shows a surplus of £19,700 and the District Executive has agreed that this sum may be used to reduce further the circuit assessments in 2021-22. We will continue to monitor the financial situation and take the necessary actions when appropriate.

The budget for 2021-22 assumes that our activities will have returned to normal, but that some reductions will be achieved by using Zoom and other more efficient ways of working. However, the Administration team has been strengthened and will cost more in the future. The budgeted expenditure for 2021-22 is slightly less than the original budget for 2020-21, but more than the revised budget for that year.

By using the savings from 2019-20 and those expected in 2020-21, the total amount to be collected through the circuit assessments is £139,750, a reduction of £28,150 or 16.8%.

The Connexional levy for the Northampton District is to increase by 1.8% in 2021-22 compared with the average national increase of 1.0%. When the figures for the Methodist Church Fund and the District assessments are combined, the overall change in the assessment for 2021-22 is a reduction of 1.72% when compared with the previous year.

District Expenses Fund Budget 2021-22

	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22
	Revised Budget	Actual	Budget	Revised Budget	Budget
	£	£	£	£	£
Income					
Assessments	157,000	157,000	167,900	167,900	139,750
Mission Enabler (from DAF)	46,000	46,000	46,000	46,000	46,000
Safeguarding (from DAF)	12,000	12,000	10,000	10,000	0
From Reserves					17,800
Surplus from 2020-21					19,700

Interest	350	703	350	350	350
	<u>215,350</u>	<u>215,703</u>	<u>224,250</u>	<u>224,250</u>	<u>223,600</u>

Expenditure

Chair's Expenses	6,500	2,689	6,500	4,000	5,000
Mission Enabler	46,000	39,439	46,000	42,000	46,000
Safeguarding	77,000	74,371	79,000	77,000	79,000
Insurance Water & Council Tax	5,500	5,234	5,500	5,300	5,600
Manse Repairs Fund	9,000	9,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Telephone (net)	2,500	1,985	2,500	2,000	2,250
Secretarial Assistance	28,000	25,444	30,000	32,000	33,000
Office Equipment Maintenance	600	0	1,000	2,000	1,000
Synod Expenses	3,500	1,485	4,000	2,000	4,000
District Office-Bouverie Court	9,000	8,640	10,000	9,000	10,000
Travel & Committee Expenses	8,500	4,491	9,000	5,000	7,000
Postage & Printing	6,000	3,503	6,500	3,500	5,000
Further Ministerial Training	5,000	3,927	5,500	2,000	5,000
Other Training	2,000	342	2,000	1,000	2,000
Education & Youth	1,000	175	1,000	1,000	1,000
Supt & New Ministers Meeting	5,000	4,919	5,500	5,000	5,500
Retreat	0	1,309	0	1,500	2,000
Independent Examination	250	240	250	250	250
Total Expenditure	<u>215,350</u>	<u>187,194</u>	<u>224,250</u>	<u>204,550</u>	<u>223,600</u>

The Collection at the 2019 September Synod amounted to £506.70 and was paid to All We Can.

Donations to the Benevolent Fund in the 2019-20 year amounted to £368.15 and £14.77 was received in interest. Expenditure was £769.55 in the same period and the balance at 31 August 2020 was £1,595.49 (£1,982.12 at 31.08.19).

General Fund Balances

	01.09.19	31.08.20
Debtors (Paid in advance)	5,142	10,468
Creditors	(1,010)	(292)
CFB Account	40,028	95,126
TSB Current Account	6,752	2,796
Total	50,912	108,099

Allocation of General Fund Balances

	01.09.19	Income	Exp.	31.08.20
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District Expenses Fund	9,289	215,703	187,194	37,799
Grants (Special projects)				
Extending Discipleship Exploring Vocation (EDEV)	1,374	0	0	1,374
Training Officer / Dist. Development Enabler	8,076	0	1,200	6,876
Bikes for Ghana	100	0	0	100
Young Leaders' Scheme	525	14,500	13,803	1,223
Together Mission	3,047	0	0	3,047
Trichy Visit	0	2,180	0	2,180
Schools Consultancy Work	6,000	(6,000)	0	0
Overstone Chaplaincy	22,500	25,000	0	47,500
Young Leaders' Scheme – Bursaries	0	10,000	2,000	8,000
Ecumenical Subscriptions	0	10,974	10,974	0
Totals	50,912	272,358	215,170	108,099

District Advance Fund

The DAF Report to Synod as required under S.O.963(3) is below and may also be found on the District website.

NORTHAMPTON METHODIST DISTRICT

District Advance Fund

Trust No. 16023

Report to Synod for the period 1st September 2019 to 31st August 2020 as required under S.O.963(3)

1. Ministry Grants Paid

Circuit	Project	£
Oxford	Café Coordinator at Rainbow House	2,500
Wantage and Abingdon	Deacon	8,000
3 Bs	Youth Worker at Well Street	2,500
3 Bs	Lay Worker	4,000
Loughborough	Chinese Presbyter	10,000
Loughborough	Chinese Presbyter (TMCP Grant)	10,000
Hinckley	Circuit Youth Worker	6,000
Rugby and Daventry	Lutterworth Dementia Coordinator	2,000
Rugby and Daventry	Gift of Years	6,000
Rugby and Daventry	RMCC Community Hub	1,000
Market Harborough	Development Worker	8,000
Peterborough	Pioneer Team Leader	7,000
Nene Valley	Young People's and Families' Worker	4,000
Amersham	Church2Community	5,000
District	District Mission Enabler	46,000
District	Safeguarding	12,000
District	St. Philip's Centre	8,000
District	Ecumenical Subscriptions	10,974
District	Young Leaders' Scheme	14,500
		<u>167,474</u>

2. Property Grants Paid

Circuit	Project	£
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Wantage & Abingdon	Trinity Abingdon Entrance	8,000
Witney & Faringdon	Charlbury Windows	8,000
Witney & Faringdon	Witney High Street Refurbishment	8,000
		<u>24,000</u>

3. Mission Start-Up Grants

Circuit	Project	£
Banbury	Equipment for Messy Church and Fun Station	750
Northampton	Podcast Production	900
Rugby and Daventry	Covid 19 Emergency Response	1,000
		<u>2,650</u>

4. Future Commitments

2020/21	Ministry	148,300
2020/21	Property	181,500
2021/22	Ministry	114,100
2022/23	Ministry	77,500
		<u>521,400</u>

5. Summary of Accounts

Income		£	Expenditure		£
Levies rec'd from Circuits		223,608.28	Ministry Grants Paid		167,474.00
CPF distribution		38,747.00	Property Grants Paid		24,000.00
Repayment of unused grant		6,000	Start-Up Grants Paid		2,650.00
Interest		6,432.35	Management Charge		1,241.92
Total Income:		<u>274,787.63</u>	Total Expenditure:		<u>195,365.92</u>
Total Income		274,787.63	Balance from 31.08.19		620,958.96
Total Expenditure		195,365.92	Net Income		79,421.71
Net Income:		<u>79,421.71</u>	Balance at 31.08.20		<u>700,380.67</u>

6. District Officer's comments and report.

The Coronavirus pandemic has caused projects to be deferred resulting in a significant reduction in payments and commitments for future years. Our policy of committing funds and keeping the retained balance as low as possible has not been achieved this year as £178,981 remains uncommitted compared with £759 12 months earlier.

Circuits with large Circuit Advance Fund balances (over £100,000) are encouraged to use their funds imaginatively and grant applications are normally only considered if a Circuit contribution is being made. The District Mission Enabler (DME) communicates with Churches and Circuits to advise and support them. She also ensures that proposals follow the Mission Policies of the District and Circuits and the priorities of the Methodist Church.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Grant applications are considered after an evaluation report has been submitted to the Finance and Grants Committee by the DME. If a personnel project has been awarded a grant for more than one year, the second and subsequent payments will not be made unless a report of the activities undertaken has been received and approved by the F & G Committee. The District Mission Enabler routinely monitors these projects.

A Property Panel advises Churches at an early stage, particularly for larger property schemes and property schemes that were approved over 3 years ago are reviewed to ensure their continuing viability.

Presented by: Andrew Lewis
 Position: District Treasurer and Grants Officer
 Date: September 2020

Other Funds	Manse Repairs	Local Preachers	Ministerial Training	Training	Educ. & Youth
Balance at 1st September 2019	16,381	11,924	8,096	7,493	550
Interest	117	85	58	54	4
Transfers from (to) the General Fund	(2,733)	0	0	0	0
Balance at 31st August 2020	13,764	12,009	8,154	7,547	554

Methodist Church Fund District Contributions and District Expenses Allocation 2021-22

This is the third year we have used the formula based on 60% for the number of ministers and 40% on cash held by the circuits and the churches. It was agreed that this would be introduced over three years and reviewed after that period. That review is being undertaken and any changes will be agreed before the 2022-23 assessments are calculated. The total amount to be charged to the circuits is £867,973 compared to £883,204 in 2019-20, a decrease of 1.72%.

The District Executive Committee has agreed to the following amounts being collected from circuits.

Methodist Church Fund District Contributions and District Expenses Allocation 2021-22					
Circuit		Annual Methodist Church Fund	Annual District Expenses	2021-22 Annual Total	2021-22 Quarterly Total
1	Oxford	49,798.55	9,556.61	59,355.16	14,838.79
2	Wantage & Abingdon	54,699.34	10,497.10	65,196.44	16,299.11
3	West Oxfordshire	57,757.97	11,084.07	68,842.04	17,210.51
5	Banbury	31,175.72	5,982.80	37,158.52	9,289.63
6	Buckingham Bicester & Brackley	25,670.22	4,926.26	30,596.48	7,649.12
7	Leicester Trinity	66,804.19	12,820.09	79,624.28	19,906.07
9	Leicester West	34,959.32	6,708.88	41,668.20	10,417.05
10	Loughborough	29,166.88	5,597.28	34,764.16	8,691.04
11	Hinckley	33,259.31	6,382.65	39,641.96	9,910.49

12	Melton Mowbray	19,697.06	3,779.98	23,477.04	5,869.26
13	Northampton	34,445.62	6,610.30	41,055.92	10,263.98
14	Rugby & Daventry	29,172.28	5,598.32	34,770.60	8,692.65
15	Stamford	42,078.30	8,075.06	50,153.36	12,538.34
19	Kettering & Corby	24,891.80	4,776.88	29,668.68	7,417.17
20	Market Harborough	9,930.25	1,905.67	11,835.92	2,958.98
21	Peterborough	15,082.37	2,894.39	17,976.76	4,494.19
23	Nene Valley	30,421.44	5,838.04	36,259.48	9,064.87
26	Milton Keynes	36,927.59	7,086.61	44,014.20	11,003.55
27	High Wycombe	38,406.30	7,370.38	45,776.68	11,444.17
28	Amersham	31,643.75	6,072.61	37,716.36	9,429.09
29	Vale of Aylesbury	32,234.74	6,186.02	38,420.76	9,605.19
Total		728,223.00	139,750.00	867,973.00	216,993.25

Reserves Policy

The District Reserves Policy was reviewed at the December 2019 meeting of the District Executive and it was agreed that we should aim to keep £20,000 in the District Expenses Fund. At 31st August 2020 we held £37,799 uncommitted in that Fund uncommitted and as indicated above, the additional £17,799 will be used to reduce the 2021-22 circuit assessments.

District Grant Applications

The District Executive Committee has agreed to award the following grants, as recommended by the Finance and Grants Committee at its meeting on 18th January 2021.

Reference	Circuit	Project	Application	Grant
Personnel				
21/01/002	Leicester West	Circuit Mission Enabler	£40,000	£40,000
21/01/004	Market Harborough	Growth & Nurture Support Worker	£40,000	£40,000
21/01/005	Northampton	Professional Support for Circuit Podcasts	£7,200	£7,200
21/01/006	Northampton	Emmanuel Group of Churches – Community Action Manager	£40,000	£40,000
21/01/007	Rugby & Daventry	Making Connexions	£35,500	£15,000
Property				
21/01/501	Hinckley	Barwell MC – Redevelopment of Toilets	£10,000	£10,000
21/01/502	Kettering & Corby	Cornerstone MC - Video Projection and Redevelopment of Toilets	£8,000	£10,000

Andrew Lewis
District Grants Officer and Treasurer

Finance & Grants – Addendum

In late March 2021, the Methodist Council agreed to reduce the MCF District Assessment by 1% from 1st September 2021. The reduction for the Northampton District is approximately 2.8% and it has been decided that the full saving of £20,301 will be passed onto the Circuits. Therefore, the information in the table on pages 12 and 13 of the Synod Reports is superseded by the following.

Methodist Church Fund District Contributions and District Expenses Allocation 2021-22 Revised April 2021					
Circuit		Annual Methodist Church Fund	Annual District Expenses	2021-22 Annual Total	2021-22 Quarterly Total
1	Oxford	48,410.27	9,556.61	57,966.88	14,491.72
2	Wantage & Abingdon	53,174.46	10,497.10	63,671.56	15,917.89
3	West Oxfordshire	56,147.81	11,084.07	67,231.88	16,807.97
5	Banbury	30,306.64	5,982.80	36,289.44	9,072.36
6	Buckingham Bicester & Brackley	24,954.62	4,926.26	29,880.88	7,470.22
7	Leicester Trinity	64,941.91	12,820.09	77,762.00	19,440.50
9	Leicester West	33,984.72	6,708.88	40,693.60	10,173.40
10	Loughborough	28,353.76	5,597.28	33,951.04	8,487.76
11	Hinckley	32,332.15	6,382.65	38,714.80	9,678.70
12	Melton Mowbray	19,147.98	3,779.98	22,927.96	5,731.99
13	Northampton	33,485.38	6,610.30	40,095.68	10,023.92
14	Rugby & Daventry	28,359.00	5,598.32	33,957.32	8,489.33
15	Stamford	40,905.26	8,075.06	48,980.32	12,245.08
19	Kettering & Corby	24,197.88	4,776.88	28,974.76	7,243.69
20	Market Harborough	9,653.41	1,905.67	11,559.08	2,889.77
21	Peterborough	14,661.93	2,894.39	17,556.32	4,389.08
23	Nene Valley	29,573.36	5,838.04	35,411.40	8,852.85
26	Milton Keynes	35,898.15	7,086.61	42,984.76	10,746.19
27	High Wycombe	37,335.62	7,370.38	44,706.00	11,176.50
28	Amersham	30,761.59	6,072.61	36,834.20	9,208.55
29	Vale of Aylesbury	31,336.10	6,186.02	37,522.12	9,380.53
Total		707,922.00	139,750.00	847,672.00	211,918.00

Andrew Lewis
 District Grants Officer and Treasurer
 April 2021

East of England Region Learning Network

Since my previous report at the start of the new Connexional year there have been significant changes within the Learning Network in this area of the country. In October 2020 the former East of England Region and the old East Central LN Regions were merged into the new Eastern Region. I was asked to take on the role of Coordinator for this new region which now covers East Anglia, BEH, Northampton, Lincolnshire and Notts & Derby districts.

With the new region comes an enlarged staff team currently consisting of Ann Howlett-Foster, John Banks, Nigel Pimlott, Gill Thomas and Michael Wadsworth and myself. As the merger has seen a reduction from two coordinator posts down to one, it was agreed in the preliminary discussions about the changes that another full-time LDO post would be created. Alongside their normal LDO responsibilities this new postholder will also have a brief to embed all aspects of EDI into the life and work of the Learning Network's activities. They will also be available as a resource to churches and circuits to help develop their culture of inclusive church. Sadly, we were unable to appoint to this post first time round but it will soon be re-advertised and we hope for a strong field of applicants. Interviews are expected to be during the week commencing 26th April.

Over the past few months we have begun to explore the differences in the ways of working between the two former regional teams. One major operational difference was that the old East Central region had adopted the model of each LDO being 'aligned' to a district. This practice is the norm throughout the LN however due to the old East of England region being just two districts and having only 1.6 FTE LDOs, we did not follow that pattern as all three of us were able to operate across both districts. However, with a significantly larger region this is no longer possible. Once we have made the new appointment we will look to introduce the 'aligned officer' model to BEH and East Anglia Districts.

Ann and Gill hold similar briefs for their work, focussing on church and community engagement, delivery of training in areas such as Positive Working Together, mediation and reconciliation etc. They also oversee the One Programme Participants. Ann continues to be involved at Connexional level with developing Safeguarding training. Now more of the CSS work is online and as more local trainers are in place for both Foundation and Advanced Modules, our work in the LN with regard to Safeguarding is now focussing on quality control of delivery and some trainer training. Gill holds more of a youth work brief alongside her other work and is responsible for keeping connections with 3Generate and the district ambassadors.

Nigel is growing his role across the whole region relating to Pioneers, New Places for New People, evangelism and growth. He has established a community of practice for those engaged in digital church planting and is coaching and supporting a growing number of individuals who are already pioneering or are exploring that journey.

Michael and John also hold similar portfolios covering the areas of W:L&P, tutor and mentor support, Bible Month and Methodist Way of Life development. Michael is also the team's go-to person for IT systems and is making great strides in developing our event booking and communication processes. John is also taking a lead on building stronger relationships with Chaplains across the whole region.

I am now spending more time on managing the team and coordinating the greater breadth of work across the region..

The online space that has swept into our work has given us, like so many others, great opportunities to offer new things. Two such things are the 'Bite-sized' sessions that we have been running for a few months now. These take a single topic and offer training and an opportunity to explore the subject. These have already included such themes as 'How to say No - without causing offence!', 'Effective Chairing of Meetings', 'Giving & Receiving Feedback' and 'Websites – vision, purpose and user experience of your church website'.

Alongside the Bite-sized session we have also introduced an 'Open Space' on the third Thursday of each month. This is a space for anyone to share in a focussed theme for about an hour. December was a short retreat for Advent, January looked forward to what we are hoping to do in 2021, and the one in March was entitled 'Give it up for Lent' - being a time to share thoughts, ideas and practices together. Please do join in future sessions yourselves and encourage others to sign up too.

Although it is still a great unknown as to when lockdowns will eventually end, we are already starting to prepare for working alongside churches and circuits as buildings re-open and in-person contact with local communities can start again. We are very happy to help circuits explore new vision as they look to grow all that has been good from an online presence, through to new mission possibilities in changed communities.

Dave Friswell

Learning and Development Coordinator, Eastern Region.

Local Preachers

The following are some updates about the current landscape of Local Preaching and Worship Leading in the Northampton District. Please forgive the lack of precise figures relating to Local Preachers and Worship Leaders. Due to a number of GDPR concerns, coupled with the present vacancy of a District Local Preachers Secretary, it has not been possible to draw together accurate statistics at this time. But hopefully what follows offers some useful insight into what work and developments have taken place with regards to Local Preaching since the September Synod.

Development of District / Regional LP Strategy Groups

In Northampton

Since Andrew Maisey stepped down last summer after many years of excellent service as District Local Preachers Secretary, Northampton has been without a DLPS. Our aligned LN Officer, Michael Wadsworth, has been working on pulling together a *District Local Preacher's Strategy Group* to carry this work. This group will be made up of a number of individuals – both Lay and Ordained – who will share the responsibility of supporting and championing the ongoing development of Local Preaching and Worship Leading in the District. It is intended that this group be chaired by a new DLPS as and when someone comes forwards. If you, or someone you know, is passionate about Local Preaching and might have something to offer to this group, please do encourage them to get in contact with Michael.

Across the Region

It is worth noting that, since September, the East Central region that Northampton has been a part of has merged with the East of England region to form a new 'Eastern' Region along with the Lincolnshire, Nottingham and Derby, East Anglia and Beds, Essex and Herts districts. It is the intention that all of these districts will develop a similar Steering Group to oversee their Local Preaching work. These groups will then hopefully be able to share best practice and work cross-regionally in supporting the training and resourcing of new and existing Local Preachers.

W:LP Training

Submissions:

Despite the on running pandemic, we have been pleased to see that there has not been a drop off in people's engagement with Local Preachers / Worship Leader training. In the Autumn Moderation cycle eight portfolios were submitted, (four A and four B) with all successfully passing the course. We anticipate a good number of submissions in the upcoming Spring Moderation.

Explore Online

In January the Connexion ran another sell-out "Explore Online" week, with a healthy number from the Northampton District engaging. These concentrated weeks have proven to be highly encouraging and stimulating opportunity for students to work through the WLP Explore material alongside a large number of peers and under the tuition of some Connexional Facilitators, including our aligned LN Officer, Michael Wadsworth. Students have reported that these weeks have been hugely valuable for their sense of learning and support. It is anticipated that after the success of the first two Explore Online weeks, that they will become a mainstay of the Connexional WLP Calendar. Details about the Explore Online weeks can be found on the Connexional Website.

W:LP 3.0

Since the September Synod the 3.0 version of the W:LP course has also been launched. Much of the actual learning elements of this revised course are the same as the previous iteration of WLP, but the key difference is that students' learning will now be assessed through online projects rather than portfolios. This new approach is very much seen as an improvement on the old course and take up and interest levels have been very high. There are a good number from the Northampton District already enrolled on the course as students. Training about this new course for Tutors, Mentors and

Local Preachers Secretaries is being rolled out online over the spring Months and has also proved popular. The first session, held on the 18th March, had over 100 attendees. The upcoming session on the 21st of April is also sold out, with places still available to book for the session on May 18th. For details about booking onto this training please speak to Michael Wadsworth.

Michael Wadsworth

Learning and Development Officer

Probationers

This year we have welcomed into the District first year Presbyterian probationer Bekkie Wright (Stamford Circuit) to join second year probationers Jason Cooke (Witney and Farringdon) and Georgina Bonzi- Simpson (High Wycombe). All of the work of both the Probationers Committee and the District Probationers Group has had to be carried out this year via the medium of Zoom.

The District Probationers Group has met regularly for prayer, reflection, discussion, and mutual support. This year we joined once again with the Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire, East Anglia and Nottingham and Derby Districts for our Regional Probationers Retreat which took place at the end of February. It was the turn of our District to host and organise the retreat this year and we enjoyed a number of stimulating presentations on The Beatitudes. The Probationers Committee met on March 4th and its recommendations were brought to the Presbyterian Synod on March 17th on Zoom.

Due to the Covid restrictions we were unable to hold a testimony service for our ordinands from last year Jervis Daniel Yovan (Leicester (Trinity), Paul G Carter (Oxford), Judith C Lincoln (Leicester (West)) and Calvin Cheung (Loughborough) and so this was arranged on Zoom for 14th February. Despite some technical challenges, over 200 attendees enjoyed a moving occasion. Our second year probationers testimony service for this year will be held on Aldersgate Sunday May 23rd and we hope and pray that we are able to meet physically to celebrate this.

I would like to express my thanks to the members of the committee who have not only given their time to attend the meetings and to read the many reports prior to the committee, but who have also so committed to encouraging and nurturing the ministry of our probationers.. Due to the decline in numbers of probationers the decision has been taken to begin working regionally as a probationers committee in partnership with the Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire, East Anglia and Nottingham and Derby Districts from the connexional year 2021-22. Our District Chair Helen Cameron will serve as one of the co-chairs of the new regional committee, our District Probationers Secretary Tim Woolley will be an ex-officio member of it, and three representatives from our district Mrs Pam Kirkland, Deacon Georgina Brooks and Rev Vida Foday will also represent our district on the committee.

Lastly, in September we will welcome a new probationer into our district as Stephen Spain begins in the Oxford circuit. Please continue to pray for all our probationers and ordinands as they journey forward in their ministries.

Rev Dr Tim Woolley

District Probationers Secretary

Property

This report summarises all consents given since the report to the last scheduled meeting of Synod on 20th September 2020, together with those projects currently on the system and awaiting consent or connexional authorisation. It incorporates activity to 10th March 2021. The report also incorporates annual returns submitted to the same date.

Consents Given

Oxford – 01

40047 Wesley Memorial (LB/CA) – Heritage Atrium Project – cost £1,427,000. Circuit £50,000, District £50,000 Raised £1,274,000. Grant from Listed Places of Worship scheme pending. Consent 14.10.20

West Oxfordshire – 03

47221 High Street, Witney (LB/CA) – Letting of church flat. Consent 23.1.21

47279 Wesley Manse, Chipping Norton – Manse refurbishment – cost £60,000. Funded from CMTE, Consent 14.12.20

47291 Westcote (LB/CA) – Installation of public access defibrillator. No cost to church. Consent 22.1.21

47382 High Street, Witney (LB/CA) – Refurbishment phase 2 - cost £60,963. Circuit £54241. Grant from Listed Places of Worship scheme pending. Consent 8.12.20

46958 – 29 Burwell Meadow – Renewal of manse letting. Consent 9.2.21

47544 – 29 Burwell Meadow – Letting of manse to new tenants. Consent 9.2.21

Leicester Trinity – 07

46043 Wesley Hall (CA) – Lease to Community Centre. Consent 9.10.20

46283 Bishop Street (LB/CA) – Installation of solar panels. Cost £27,131. District £8,000. Fully funded. Consent 5.11.20

47425 Bishop Street (LB/CA) – Lease part 10 Bishop Street. Consent 26.1.21

47430 Bishop Street (LB/CA) – Lease 12 Bishop Street. Consent 26.1.21

47435 Bishop Street (LB/CA) – Lease front of Pilgrim House. Consent 26.1.21

Leicester (West) – 09

43497 Glenfield (CA) – Project amendment to re-schedule finance on phase 1. Cost £319,658. Circuit £42,400, District £8,000. Consent 26.8.20

Hinckley – 11

47373 Sharnford (LB) – Removal of upper section of chimney, Cost £3,171. Locally funded. Consent 15.12.20

Melton Mowbray – 12

46733 Scalford (CA) – Lease of burial ground. Consent 9.10.20

Northampton – 13

47415 – 16 Booth Crescent – Sale of manse. Value £350,000. Consent 19.12.20

Rugby & Daventry – 14

47027 – 40 Dunsmore Avenue – demolition of boundary wall. Cost £5,902. Fully funded. Consent 9.9.20

47381 – 2 Rowan Drive – Letting of manse. Consent 15.1.21

Stamford – 15

42981 Stamford (LB/CA) – Replacement of hall windows. Cost £30,000. Circuit £7,500. Raised £23,000. Grant from Listed Places of Worship scheme pending. Consent 23.11.20

46835 Stamford (LB/CA) – Kitchen refurbishment – cost £38,000. Circuit £10,000. Raised £30,000. Methodist Insurance grant pending. Consent 9.10.20.

Kettering & Corby 19

45933 Cornerstone, Corby – new toilets, replacement boiler, new audio visual system. Cost £30,000. Circuit £10,000, District £10,000. Fully funded. Consent 3.2.21

47049 – St Giles, Desborough (LB) – Replacement boiler in ancillary premises. Cost £6,528. Fully funded. Consent 10.9.20

Peterborough – 21

47177 – 89 Birchtree Avenu – Letting of manse. Consent 10.12.20

Nene Valley – 23

45027 Hope, Higham Ferrers (CA) – Project Amendment to incorporate Chapel Aid loan. Consent 30.11.20

45027 Hope, Higham Ferrers (CA) – Project Amendment to incorporate additional grant funding. Consent 2.2.21

High Wycombe – 27

44979 Marlow (CA) – Community hub project – cost £713,000. Circuit £271,940 (includes proceeds from sale of Naphill) District £21,700 (LMF). Raised £697,200. Consent 12.10.20

Awaiting Consent

Oxford – 01

28436 Wesley Memorial (LB/CA) – Overall project - to be removed when all phases complete.

42654 Kidlington – Worship area re-ordering – proposed cost £270,000. Circuit £50,000, District £10,000. Raised to date £130,000. Funding awaited.

Nene Valley – 23

45032 Hope, Higham Ferrers (CA) – Community Hub rear extension. Proposed cost £366,000. Await funding

Awaiting Connexion

West Oxfordshire – 03

27726 Faringdon (LEP) – Registration of sharing agreement. Status unclear.

Leicester West – 09

43975 Glenfield (CA) – 2020 Vision project - Overall project - to be removed when all phases complete

45198 Glenfield (CA) – 20/20 Vision project phase 2 – cost £104,000. Funded. Some work transferred to phase 1. Awaiting updating and Conservation authorisation.

45199 Glenfield (CA) – 20/20 Vision project phase 3 – cost £231,000. Circuit £23,000, District £8,000. Raised to date £146,000. Merger with phase 2 being considered. Awaiting updating and Conservation authorisation.

Northampton – 13

46910 Kingsley Park (LB) – Installation of permanent ramp. Cost £7,385. Fully funded. Formal consultation in progress.

Nene Valley – 23

44888 Earls Barton (CA) – Project 2020 – proposed cost £75,500. Circuit £50,000. Funding incomplete.

Awaiting Consent

Oxford – 01

28436 Wesley Memorial (LB/CA) – Overall record of Open Doors project

42654 Kidlington – Worship Area Re-ordering – proposed cost £306,000. Circuit £50,000, District £10,000. Funding incomplete.

Nene Valley – 23

45032 Hope, Higham Ferrers (CA) – rear extension to Community Hub – proposed cost £366,000. Funding to be established.

Annual Returns

District Return – complete

Circuit Returns – complete 4, in progress 1, not started 16

Church Returns – complete 123 (56%), in progress 39, not started 57

Chris Linfo

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Chris Linfo

District Property Secretary

Retreat

District Retreat January 2021

As you will expect to hear, this years District Retreat didn't take place at Launde Abbey as in previous years, it was a 'virtual' retreat and took place via Zoom.

Following last years survey, we have continued to hold a retreat but for a shorter period of time, just the three days/two nights. This year our leaders were Revd Michael and Mrs Margaret Sawyer who led with a theme called 'Walking on the shore – Grown up conversations about God with self and others in our contemporary world to nurture and encourage us.' It was excellent.

Everyone engaged with the sessions and made good use of the times for self reflection about what we have noticed about ourselves and the church in these Covid-19 times. All of this in space that we had set aside in our own homes. The input sessions were: 1. What do we notice as we tread the Christ path in a changed world? 2. Going even deeper into God; "Let your God love you." E Gateley. 3. How might things change? What does change feel like? How might you embrace change? 4. Spirituality in a time of social distancing. Moving on..... with what and how?

There was also time to split into breakout groups of 4s and 2s to talk about how we see God, what our relationship with God is now and how the pandemic has affected our views and beliefs. What will we need to nurture and what will be let go of when all restrictions are lifted.

The retreat was well received and several who attended appreciated the 'virtuality' as they wouldn't have been able to go to Launde Abbey. This perhaps leads the District to discuss future retreats; will there be 'virtual' retreats instead of or as well as physical retreats?

Thank you Michael and Margaret for leading us and thank to everyone who joined in. Next years retreat will be organised by Revd Nicola Vidamour as she takes on this new role.

Rev'd Lin Francis

District Retreat Organiser

Sabbaticals

The Methodist Church supports the taking of a Sabbatical every seven years. This is usually a given and those, who are eligible, are eager to plan their three months. This year has been a bit different. As far as was possible, ministers were encouraged to take the time as planned even if the activities had to change, but in several cases, this was not possible, and we are now in a position where 'years of travel' are running into each other.

In the Connexional Year 2019-2020 five ministers were able to complete their sabbaticals and gained new experiences as well as renewed energy for their return to Circuit ministry. In this Connexional year (2020-21) three ministers should complete their sabbaticals but there are several who, for good reason, have asked to postpone.

To delay is a difficult decision for all, the ministers, their families and their Circuits, because the planning that goes into a successful sabbatical takes time and much consultation. When trips abroad are involved, we still do not know (at this moment in time) whether they will be possible. My prayers are with them all, but I know God will guide them along the path He wants them to go, and the District Sabbaticals Advisory Group will do all it can to support them.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me if you think your Sabbatical is due and, despite my serious effort, I have missed you. Also, if you have any queries about sabbaticals, feel free to email me.

Sue Bayliss
Sabbaticals Secretary

Safeguarding

We would like to begin by thanking everyone involved in Safeguarding in Circuits and Churches during this last Connexional year when for the most part we have been in various lockdowns and restrictions have been in place for us all. So, thank you to our many Circuit and Church safeguarding officers and those in leadership positions.

Also, a huge thank you to everyone who notices and understands, making safeguarding a part of our Methodist culture.

Safeguarding Training

Due to the pandemic all training face to face has been postponed since February 2020.

What has been carried out has been online and will continue to be online until the autumn.

The new Foundation course in safeguarding (Creating Safer Space - CSS FM 2020), was launched in London in January 2020 before we went into a national lockdown. The new Foundation course then had to be adapted to enable it to be delivered online. During the late summer of 2020, the online version of the new Foundation course was piloted. The District Safeguarding Team, alongside the Learning Network (LN), have enabled our trainers to be trained to deliver face to face foundation training. We have also trained those trainers who feel able to deliver the course online and as a result the online course is being rolled out in some Circuits across the district. In addition to facilitate online delivery the District Executive have supported a proposal for cross Circuit training clusters to operate in order to enable partnership working and increase trainer capacity across Circuits.

Due to the delays and difficulties in delivering training in a pandemic and as safeguarding training needs to be undertaken every 4 years, it was agreed that anyone approaching the 4-year mark in 2020, would have this extended to 1st June 2021. For those in this category, who have now not done safeguarding training for over 4 years, this must be a priority alongside DBS renewals (5 yearly).

The Creating Safer Space Advanced safeguarding course, (CSS AM 2020), will not be available online until late summer this year. There are some pilots taking place around the country from March – June and Northampton District is one such pilot District.

It is also highly likely that online training will be a permanent fixture for all safeguarding training.

Circuit Safeguarding Officer Gatherings

One of the positives of being in lockdown has been the ability to gather online across our Circuits, District and Connexion.

The DSO's have been having regular meetings with the Circuit Safeguarding Officers over the last year. This has been an opportunity to support, to share information and to ensure that there is compliance with Connexional safeguarding policy, procedures, and guidance.

The DSO's are working with the Circuit Safeguarding Officers to ensure that DBS and training databases are up to date as we move towards a time when we can once more meet in our church buildings and face to face.

IICSA

The Methodist Church was required to provide information into the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. The IICSA report that will include the Methodist Church will be published later this year. In the meantime, reports have been published in relation to both the Church of England and the Roman Catholic churches.

Gill has written a Methodist response to this which has been widely circulated.

It is almost 6 years on from the publication of the Past Cases Review and with the findings from IICSA there is much challenge to us in the Methodist Church. Gill spoke to the DSO day in October 2020 on our Methodist response and will be continuing to do work in this area.

Digital Media

We have been working hard to ensure compliance with policy and although we have not generally been meeting face to face over this last year, with the church having moved online, much of our work has been in the area of digital media and safeguarding. Gill is working with the Connexion in order to develop new social media guidance that is relevant to the way that we now engage as churches across many social media platforms.

DBS

In direct response to the pandemic the validation of documents is currently allowed to be checked remotely. This has enabled this extremely important process to continue.

Sue leads on this bespoke work for ministerial DBS checks within the District working closely with the District office and Helen as Chair of District.

Safeguarding Contracts

Sue leads the team on this work for the District

There are Safeguarding Contracts in our District. These enable people to worship in our churches and to continue their Christian journey, whilst also keeping children and vulnerable people safe in churches and managing risk and offering support for those on the contracts.

The work of monitoring and support groups are essential in the support and monitoring of those on safeguarding contracts. Thank you to all involved in such groups, which are essential work.

During this last year we have kept in touch with the Monitoring and Support Groups via zoom and those groups have been meeting where necessary to support those on contracts.

The DSOs are in the process of ensuring that records and meetings schedules are up to date and that reviews are scheduled in a timely manner.

Gill Crippen

Sue Ioannou

District Safeguarding Officers